

Migration to the United States in the Plastic Arts

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Abstract: *The international world of arts revolves around consolidated centers for study and training since the 18th century, as well as for its market and accreditation. Although the sites for exhibition and dissemination have been extended to almost everyone in prestigious biennial exhibitions, festivals or awards, as well as in important museums, the truth is that to access these sites it is necessary to be a worldwide renowned artist or with the relationships that allow the construction of a trajectory. Where can and applicant for the artistic activity, resident in Zacatecas and in any poor and small city in Latin America become professional? Which way to go? What models are necessary to understand to go beyond them and consolidate a name? The United States of America became a benchmark of first importance in the visual arts during the 20th century due to the migration of artists from Europe after the two world wars. Great masters creators of avant - garde and postures, renowned icons of artistic activity contributed to the specialization of galleries and museums, shaped the private collections of wealthy Americans assiduous to luxury with unique riches and references of opulence other than European nobility and bourgeoisie.*

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United States of America, Route of professionalization in visual arts

The world of plastic arts is a difficult path that requires a lot of work, effort and perseverance of those who assume it as a profession and decide to dedicate their way of life to shape their activities, projects and the very existence, both individual and the family. There is no doubt that the development of plastic arts requires learning and mastery in drawing, painting, engraving, modeling, sculpture, manipulation of new materials techniques; as well as new technical and technological means. The contemporary artist must be able to create a language and not only unique pieces, there is no doubt that creativity, talent and perseverance will be his tools but it is also necessary to build a trajectory, to show his work; that is, to participate in collective exhibitions and to create individual samples not only memorable but also negotiable that can provide the financial means to support a family with all the responsibilities that it entails, as well as to guarantee the acquisition of the materials and tools that are required to continue the creative work.

The artist aspires to build his own style and to take a place in the history of art, the one's particular circumstances in life will facilitate this desire or it would make difficult to achieve it is a fact that the most recognized museums and the most powerful art markets are located in well - defined geographical and social points: Europe, the United States and Asia, cosmopolitan capitals with rich citizens whose wealth allow them to acquire contemporary art. As long as the artists have access to these centers, their success will be possible or simply unattainable. This is the situation of the creators in today's globalization.

Zacatecas is a mining city in northern Mexico with just over 500, 000 inhabitants; it has the largest number of museums after the State of Mexico - almost 70 - , and a permanent influx of artistic activities throughout the year. However, the path of professionalization for Zacatecan artists it is placed outside the entity, since there is no an academic center that offers a degree that they can achieve or workshops that give them a complete and optimal professional training. The Autonomous University of Durango on the Zacatecas campus offered a degree in plastic arts to a single group of six members, who studied from 2005 to 2009, and the

Autonomous University of Zacatecas opened the career in arts in January 2012 with a focus on Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Art Theory and Art Education; however, the project must still be consolidated starting with its teaching staff. On the other hand, Zacatecas is one of the three poorest states in the Mexican territory as well as well as violence and insecurity; so that neither the art market nor any other business can prosper under the yoke of corruption and crime.

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The European world, the center of Western culture, is far from Mexico; separated by kilometers of land and oceans, as well as different languages and huge economic differences, Mexican artists have little chance of completing their training in that continent through their own resources. However, the economic, technological and political colossus of America, the country with enormous power in all academic fields is also one of the most important spots in the world related with the development of the arts since the late nineteenth century.

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The development of the art market after the constitution of a crowd of modern spectators, without academic prejudices and with purchasing power created the conditions for new artistic proposals to be received and disseminated. In this way they reached extraordinary sales values that made the artist and his way of life a model long caressed by young aspirants to that world. New rhythms of life and conditions around art, such as academic and professional training, dissemination, research and analysis of art, in addition to the aforementioned market, placed the United States in a privileged place next to Europe for the migration of artists searching for the American dream, in this case not only of fortune but also of fame.

The United States then became a dream longed by artists with a desire to be part of this artistic world; entering the market, meeting promoters, collectors and the most important creators today; Knowing the latest means and techniques of expression, handling innovative materials and understanding cutting - edge aesthetic theories and concepts. There are many aspects of the American dream in plastic arts today and they all have a place in the United States. Mexico, a neighbor influenced by American ways of life, is the main exporter of Latin American immigrants and Zacatecas in particular, is a state with one of the greatest mobility of countryside men. A large percentage of families have relatives in the north, all have an acquaintance or a friend. In the specific case of the plastic arts, what is the American dream for Zacatecas? Who craves it? Who are looking for it? Who do it? Who has done something to achieve it?

The culture of northern Mexico includes “stepping onto the other side” looking for work or to study, to buy and resell or just to buy; to go on vacation, to see family and visiting new places. In the case of artists, this “step” is necessary if they want to build a trajectory, if it is not possible to study in universities, schools or workshops, at least it is possible to visit the museums and carefully observing their works, entering inside the galleries and exploring the rooms of exhibitions where the most recognized of current art is exhibited, they are a basic complement in the formation of every creator.

The American dream for the artist has many faces and includes a huge range of routes in commerce, in studies, in exhibitions and in cultural training, but in each of them there are few opportunities to enter. How many Zacatecan artists have managed to travel to United States and under what circumstances? How has this step led to the importance of his career? Who has taken this step and how has its influence extended to other creators? Certainly, there are very few artists who have achieved it and later we will talk about some examples.

The contemporary artist in Zacatecas is forced to leave his State searching his own path but not as an aimless tramp, but as the tenacious architect who knows the plans and builds the entire building with all its details. The closest but not always accessible path for the creator’s professional formation is the United States through an immediate, distant, friend or acquaintance relative. The endearing need is to go out, to look; but what exactly does the artist look for?

knowledge? Places and inspiration? People and relationships? Money and fame? Better life quality? Personal and professional experiences? Luxuries?

Artists, those strange or extravagant beings with talents and sensibilities that lead them to unconventional experiences and to non - established life forms trace their paths in particular ways. A search for training, learning, relationships; the longing for prestige and status, rather than a fortune without context, has traced the Zacatecas route to the United States in the plastic arts from a few characters like Manuel Felguérez and Rafael Coronel whose background were Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, among others.

The United States is then a route, alternating to Europe, for Latin American and especially Zacatecan artists, who aspire to professional recognition and to ascend one or several steps on the stairs to transcendence; Since for many this becomes a determining destination, it is worth asking: is the United States the way and the mean for the consolidation of an artist or is the United States the end in itself?

The searching for training and prestige of an artist is not only academic or technical, but of observation as stated above, in addition to contemplate the works of the great masters of the twentieth century in museums, finding the creators of the twenty - first century working while performing the pieces that will fill the pages of art history books and to observe them tour the rooms of prestigious museums or biennials is a privilege that some have achieved. The complete work of these great teachers, the way they behave, what they read, what they see, what they think, what they feel; everything from which his work is born is a reference in the training of young apprentices. How to find access to that world? Where to learn this knowledge? It is the wonder of the American dream, it is available to everyone with unwavering tenacity from the humblest way, as an associate or assistant in a workshop; many times without the elementary piece of communication, with different languages and cultures but with similar emotions, sensations and concerns and, above all, with the certainty of stepping on a firm ground in the path that leads to the history of art. We will see this later with some cases of artists included in this research.

Beside the admiration and identification with the great masters there are notorious influences in the work of the new creators, sometimes subtle and sometimes huge; the artist then confronts each of the worlds of his favorite teachers and at the same time the world where he lives and which he is learning to understand, the universe of his childhood, his studies, the art market and the museums, the one of the universal exhibitions and, suddenly he faces his own work. What to say? How to say it? How to face the other and keeping what belongs to him? How to look for an identity or affirm a culture in contemporary plastic arts where globalization shows a multiculturalism at all times?

The Zacatecan artist arrives in the United States by very different journeys in each case. Below we will see some of the most representative examples, due to the importance of

their authors and their work, to answer the previous questions regarding a well - determined situation.

Use and mastery of technology, Innovation in the media.

One of the dreams in today's art world is innovation in the work, creating completely new pieces in the way of interacting with the viewer; either captivate, dismay and even disgust, to provoke any emotion or feeling; the goal is for the public to return to reality in a different way when viewing that artistic proposal. The artist wants the public to observe his surroundings with other eyes, to feel himself, to taste experiences in which he had never thought and new sensations outside his imagination, he wants to be renewed, encouraged and that his thoughts on what he proposes to be intensified by the contemplation of art. To achieve this goal, materials and technology are very important since they constitute the means by which the artist carries out his project and captivates the viewer.

When computers emerged and special drawing and design programs were made, the visual arts were seduced by the attractive scope of that new tool. The impressive results, due to their speed, accuracy and versatility, served as inspiration and devoted reason for the most innovative artists in the world to begin to work their designs with this tool.

In the 70s there were already computers in the most important schools in Mexico available for teachers, at that time, the rupture movement dominated the world of national art and abstract artists experimented with geometric composition from different possibilities. One of them, the Zacatecan Manuel Felguérez, who had led that movement together with Vicente Rojo, Pedro Coronel and others, was then recognized by prestigious artists, researchers, collectors and gallery owners in the country.

The Felguérez family moved their residence to Mexico City since Manuel was a child, there he began his career in the arts by learning traditional, mixed and avant - garde techniques; in this way he confronted the great muralist painters with a new aesthetic proposal, abstract art.

The teaching activity was a complement to the professional career of maestro Felguérez. In 1956 Matías Goeritz appointed him as a sculpture master at the Universidad Iberoamericana where he remained six years; In 1969 he was a teacher of Formal Design in the Industrial Design career at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), the next year he taught the experimental workshop at the National School of Plastic Arts and then the Visual Research, in addition to other subjects. During the next three years he worked in the Humanities Coordination of the same University as a researcher with the theme "Computer art design", research from where innovative ideas emerged in the creative processes of the teacher extending to artistic activity inside and outside the country.

In the 70s, I was a teacher in San Carlos and the class I taught was called "Composition of the structure of the painting". To make that structure, geometry was used because it, as part of mathematics, is accurate and one can

notice its own defects and virtues when drawing up a painting; in addition, as a learning system it is absolutely useful. Teaching this class, my work was adapted to what I taught because it is very difficult to teach one thing and to do another. Then I was leading my production to show me what I had to teach the students. It was a field of experimentation, creation and invention where I went to the bottom with all its consequences and those consequences can be seen in my work. [1]

As a result of computer research, increasingly specialized, the artist traveled to Boston in 1975 as a guest researcher at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, at Harvard University thanks to a scholarship received from the Guggenheim Foundation. Once in the United States and with the latest technology tools at its disposal, Felguérez could then reach the latest consequences in computer design and experimentation. "I made little pictures because I lived in a tiny apartment. I made them by passing the ideas from the computer to the canvas." [2] As a result of this process, he not only completed a large series of pieces but also a sculpture. With all these works, a successful exhibition was set up at the Harvard Carpenter Center. Computer design allowed Felguérez to work with vertiginous rapidity and to obtain spectacularly perfect results; despite of these incredible advances, the teacher was not entirely satisfied. The designs were made by a machine and this was obvious, the human hand does not reach that meticulous and infallible perfection, the drawings were a perfect art form and therefore dehumanized.

My drawings came out as made with drawing rules and set squares, and I was interested in providing these lines with the imperfection of "handmade" natural strokes and thus achieve the identification of a work arisen from these features, as in the case of authentication of signatures in banks. [3]

The artist then understood that technology is only a tool and a mean in the creative process; It cannot conform the final work because the content of the artwork can only be placed by the author. The results of the research during that stay were published in several American magazines. In Mexico, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México published the books: *The Aesthetic Machine*, 1979 and *The Multiple Space*, 1979.

One of the first Zacatecan artists that traveled to the United States searching for professional development was Manuel Felguérez, and he is the first one we take as a reference for this analysis. Despite of the impressive results and innovation in the master's pieces, both in composition, color, texture and in movement, Felguérez observed a depersonalization in the work precisely because of the automation in the creative process and he tried to save the result at the time of the execution on the canvas by its own stroke. In this way, his proposal, totally new in the use of creative resources of the plastic arts in the early 70s, marked an important period in his career and opened the doors of the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. He worked as researcher and professor in this institution from 1977 until his retirement in 1991. After the period influenced by

technology entrenched in the United States, Felguérez used in his work a material texture full of nuances with strong organic loads that provided different effects in each piece, more emotional and less automatic. Despite all the changes and experimentations, Felguérez never left his basic composition from geometric shapes.

The American dream of an artist: wealth, luxury and pleasures

One of the most long-awaited attractions in the plastic arts is economic income, the idea of the young creator discovered by a gallery owner who places his work on the tops of collecting it into an instant millionaire, the life of luxuries that he hadn't imagined, they became the final goal for many artists after the famous example of Jean Michel Basquiat. The American art market has established the exchange values of many works and artists throughout the twentieth century and what goes of the XXI in the most important auctions of the world, Christie's and Sotheby's, placed in New York and London. Important galleries have opted for new talents and discovered fresh and innovative pieces, often conceptual in nature but that can function as a decorative element in the residences and offices of powerful businessmen, actors, singers, doctors or lawyers; always regulars of status and power symbols. How can a Zacatecan artist enter this world? Knowing the market values, the tastes of the public, collectors, how exhibitions and sales work in the galleries is a closed circle where it is only possible to enter with the right relationships or a well-planned strategy.

There is an artist born in San Luis Potosí on August 10, 1956, of a Zacatecan mother, who decided to build his studio, his family and his life in Zacatecas, where he lived most of his life. Alejandro Nava managed to open the doors of that longed-for world of art in the United States and enter to enjoy success.

With the tenacity that always characterized him, Nava obtained a scholarship to travel to New York in 1986 to carry out an independent study and research project, he stayed along four months in that city where he took notes of everything he saw and established his own conclusions after a continuous exercise of deep analysis and reflection on art shows during the twentieth century. "The work consisted of visiting galleries and museums, it was research about the importance of Latin American and European art. There was a lot of painting and not multimedia or as many disciplines as now." [4] Alejandro met great teachers like the Chilean Roberto Sebastián Matta, the Colombian Omar Rayo and the Nicaraguan Armando Morales Sequeira. The experience was useful to strengthen his work with painting and continue his research in the city of Chicago, where he found a reality opposite to that of New York. Having met and lived with the leading figures of Latin avant-garde art at an international level, in Chicago he knew the marginal art from his gut.

It was another situation because I came across to what is known as the underground art of Chicanos, the intellectual and pictorial limitations of migrants. For them and for me it was interesting because they are very marginalized and did not dare to take their works to galleries and other contexts but still there was a very enriching language. [5]

Chicano painting, with its particular iconography based on pre-Hispanic, racial and religious motives, especially around the Virgin of Guadalupe, stems from the immigrant's pure feeling of discrimination, injustice and the bad treatment he has received since he began the trip to the northern country. With purely amateur drawing techniques, artists do not have professional or academic studies, they paint what they keep in their memory, in the heart and in the veins. Alejandro found these works for the first time in Chicago but he felt no technical or content affinity. He already had a personal language and his own interests in artistic experimentation. He got a job in a gallery where he saw again the works of international importance that prevailed in the North American market. The owner was interested in his work and showed several pieces, he also exchanged Alejandro's paintings for collectibles such as an engraving by Alberto Durero, for example; with these exchanges Nava enriched his private art collection.

In this city he met Héctor Duarte, a Zacatecan painter whom he had met before at the former Zacatecan Institute of Fine Arts where together they attended the painting workshop. They obtained the commission of two murals; one on 26th Street and Kosner and one in the Mexican food restaurant "El gusto", where they made a reproduction of Dr. Hierro Street located in the city of Zacatecas.

Nava continued working on his oil easel painting with great success in the gallery but the demand for his work dismayed him, suspecting the juicy attraction for money, he moved away from the temptation of success and he decided to explore a new language, rethinking his aesthetic interests distancing as much as possible from the commercial world. When he finished the work on the murals he carried out with Héctor, about three months later, Nava returned to Zacatecas with a fresh vision of current art, painting, the market, the public, gallery owners and collectors. He imposed himself the task of training young people to guide them in their profession and give them the opportunities that it cost them so much to achieve.

In November of that same year, 1986, the Julio Ruelas Painting and Engraving Workshop was formed under the coordination of Alejandro. From the first moment he committed himself very seriously to the project and sought ways to pay for courses by prestigious teachers such as José Luís Cuevas, Manuel Felguérez, Francisco de Santiago, Ismael Guardado, Benjamín Domínguez, Karla Rippey, Alberto and Francisco Castro Leñero, Leo Acosta and Juan Manuel de la Rosa, to name a few examples. In the workshop the young artists learned basic techniques and had tools, facilities and dissemination; among them there were Ignacio Vera Ponce, Mónica Romo, Armando Haro Márquez, Plinio Ávila, Leticia Zubillaga, Susana Salinas and Gabriela Suárez del Real. Alejandro continued his commitment to the Zacatecan formation until his premature death, due to cancer on February 20, 2014.

Contemporary art and universal culture

In the United States, immigrants from a large number of countries with deep-rooted cultures come together that converge in a series of contrasting traditions and behaviors where artists from all disciplines find a rich source of

inspiration, highlight the richness of beliefs, the colorful clothing, the drama of stories, the moving lives marked in senile faces of children or in the imperturbable hope of sensitive elders. How does the artist visualize all these images and situations and how does he reflect it in his work? Chicano painting, full of bright colors, rough figures with rough traces of marginal scenes about the painful situations experienced by migrants of racism, abuse, loneliness and injustice under the protection and perpetual help of the virgin or the saints. Abstract painting or conceptual works by European masters use the ethnic or symbolic proposals of Mesoamerica, India, China or Africa as a starting point by using different materials such as textures on canvas, objects, waxes, oils, acrylics on supports different from the traditional square or rectangular frames, which are now flat, concave or spherical of different shapes and sizes in daring proposals.

Precisely this contrast of cultures, the openness to the universal and contemporary world, in a cosmopolitan environment far removed from the regional, the intimacy and secrecy of a small community in northern Mexico such as Zacatecas. The abrupt encounter with this multiculturalism and the most current contemporary art marked profoundly the following course in an artist's career through self - reflection on his own work, its content and the means used to expose it. Meditation, self - criticism and observation of the work of other artists are necessary at different times to affirm elements of creation, to eradicate or modify them, to draw new directions and rethinking objectives.

In the naivety of this pure work, without prejudices or vices multiplied in academies. The naturalness in the work of a talented young man who began to work the techniques of drawing and engraving in the Julio Ruelas workshop, faces that world of art, international and elitist.

After ten years of learning in the Julio Ruelas workshop, in 1995, Ignacio Vera Ponce is then delivered without any distraction to the artistic activity in his private home. Having the awareness of the importance of being prepared not only technically but intellectually to understand the speeches of other artists, Ignacio feels anxious to leave the country and decides to travel to the United States.

The first destination in the year 2000 is the city of Chicago, but Ponce feels that he does not have the preparation to analyze and to assimilate contemporary art in the important museums of the city, since he did not have a maturity of his own work or a definite project. After concluding his show *The great road in 1996*, Ignacio's objectives were disoriented, so the United States imposed itself as the best option to deal with this updated art world with the latest proposals from the most recognized artists in the world.

In 2001 Vera Ponce exhibited in the workshop - gallery Mestizarte, in Chicago, the series *Hollow Men*, engravings made using traditional color technique. This time it was an easily transportable, cheaper and more commercial work. With it, the edition of a catalog was carried out; in the artistic aspect, it can be said that there was a setback with his previous exhibition, which was experimental and Ponce's

objective when traveling to the United States to find that new approach was overshadowed by the option of placing his work in the Latin market of that country. Indeed, the sample was a great success and the author sold the entire series to a Mexican collector and resident of the United States.

With the money obtained on the sale, Ponce began the construction of his house - studio in the city of Zacatecas and to support the expensive project he began the painting of all kind of work such as still life, landscapes and portraits that the collectors bought immediately. It was a period of intense rhythm of work to maintain the construction that inevitably removed him from creative work. The painter recalls: "All this causes me to continue without evolving in my work" [6] and his professional lethargy was extended. The financial solvency of an artist allows him to make pieces of his own inspiration, whim or desire, the need leads him to take orders and fulfill them where freedom has limitations and conditions.

The mood of not being able to do what is desired and to postpone it for a job that never ends because it arrives endlessly, affects the work and is reflected in it. On commissioned pieces, the artist does not have incentives such as technical or aesthetic challenges, establishing new relationships, spreading outside established areas and the payment itself is very economical. Nacho met collectors in the United States and managed to enter the Latin market successfully but in that country he also contemplates avant - garde art, which he considers art for art, of majestic freedom without conditioning, radiant creativity and he feels very remote in the technical, thematic and content, he is convinced that he must work more, knowing more and learning more. Give himself the freedom to experiment, to break ideological, aesthetic and theoretical limits. The diversity of cultures is contained in a variety of art where everything has room but not in any way but artistic, in a sublime way, able to dismay the viewer and lead him to an aesthetic experience; That experience is, finally, what unites the viewer with the artist and creates an identification link, whether it is emotional, intellectual, ideological or cultural, which leads to the desire to possess such work, to the birth of collecting.

Multiculturalism in the plastic arts between Zacatecas and the United States of America

In the mid - twentieth century Zacatecas was a region with few opportunities for academic training, the Instituto de Ciencias offered a few careers, the newly founded Instituto Zacatecano de Bellas Artes had drawing, painting, dance and piano workshops, however, despite of the commitment with the founders in order to achieve a complete training with theoretical classes taught by teachers of La Esmeralda and the Instituto Nacional de Antropología related with history and art conservation, between young people and adults interested in the classes there was no a vital engagement with art, a true fusion with the artistic world and its activities was required, for them they were only activities for evening entertainment. There was no contact with international exhibitions or national artists, there were no known works of professional artists live; therefore, the visual culture of citizens was practically non - existent.

One of the youngest students of the IZBA, Alfonso López Monreal, grew up in it since there he began his technical studies as a child. Having the awareness of his vocation and with great talent in drawing, but with a lack of proper guidance, he moved to the city of Guanajuato to study architecture.

Guanajuato not only changed the social environment but also the perspectives of López Monreal, in an approach to American culture through foreign students and in the firmness of a new profession in the plastic arts, his vision was set in the United States of America to continue his formation. This decision was influenced by his girlfriend Moly Dotty, first vocalist of the group *The Past Times*, she invited him to Los Angeles to visit her family but, a few kilometers after entering the border, local police arrested him at the San Clemente prison, 25 miles of American territory. Despite having a valid passport and visa, the artist lived what the undocumented people experience after their arrival in the territory, he spent a night and a day in that jail while it was verified that all his documents were original. After the police considered that there was nothing illegal, they decided to release him but they didn't let him out without emphasizing his wrong ideas about contempt and inequality. "They let me go to the immigration office to Los Angeles but before they forced me to take a bath and putting on clean clothes because, they said - you are entering the United States." [7]

The way the Latinos are seen by North Americans shows a deep discrimination, despotism and emotional and physical abuse that diminishes the spirit of the visitors. In spite of that, Alfonso was in Los Angeles where he got personally involved with the activities of the world of arts, the big shops specialized in materials and tools, the artistic and cultural organizations, studies and workshops where anyone can learn techniques at no cost, how exhibitions work, and the job in galleries. There he knew about the existence of the San José School of Arts in San Francisco and he decided to move to that city to formalize his studies and beginning his professional training. However, the interest and unconditional perseverance of the artist, everything that is recognized and professional has a higher cost, also the maintenance and acquisition of work materials meant having a stable job with a fixed salary that allowed him to pay for his life and studies in that city.

Moly was related with many people and put in touch to López Monreal with a couple who could help him since she was a painter. The couple Solange Landa, of French origin and her American husband, had just adopted two children and had planned to move to Paris with their children. Solange offered Poncho to go with them as an assistant in his workshop and with the children, the painter gladly accepted because the United States did not satisfy him "I never felt comfortable, there was a lot of discrimination in general and especially against Latinos", [8] and, on the other hand, he wanted to study plastic arts in the old continent, to know the traditional techniques and materials used since ancient times.

The brief stay of Alfonso López Monreal in the United States of America was enough to verify the huge economic

investment required in the training of an artist, not only in the acquisition of materials but also to have access to prestigious centers of study. On the other hand, his staying also showed him the world of the arts from one of the most important world capitals, he was able to know and to understand the functioning of his structures and relationships, as well as the multiculturalism immersed in international art.

Cultural identity of Zacatecan artists under multicultural influences in the United States of America

The identity of the common Zacatecan people is about broken soil, dry and cold weather, poverty of vegetation, food, industry and employment. Different social levels have faced adverse realities in repeated situations for many decades; it is a reality the lack of studies and work in the lower and peasant class as well as its entrenched immigration to the United States that started many generations ago. The desire for overcoming and competitiveness in the middle class leads it to try to expand possibilities of study and work, through relatives that are residents in the northern country, an opportunity repeatedly sought at least to learn the English language. The upper class simply pays the academic and support fees in renowned schools so that their children have access to the best possible education.

In the plastic arts, as we have seen, there is also that desire to find better opportunities in personal and professional development as well as a place in the competition to transcend. One of the most tenacious Zacatecan artists who got a place in the United States and overcame all the adversities that Latinos face, as well as the fact of being a woman, because of the elitism and discrimination that persist in gender distinction is Tere Chavez.

I look for those opportunities and I have a lot of perseverance to reach them. I suffered discrimination because I was Latina and because I was a woman but they did actually give me opportunities. I participated in a collective exhibition with mine and Tamayo's work in the City Hall of Los Angeles, it was a very important event where they gave the award known as "the bronze star", which is a present to Latin prestige, the Councilor handed it to me, to a poet, a musician and others. Mayor Villa Raigoza, Councilor José Huizar, Oscar de la Olla, Meche Carreño, Cristian Castro attended at the inauguration, and many important people; they sent a limousine for me to take me to the red carpet where they opened the door and I passed the path of the stars. [9]

Tere Chávez was born in the city of Zacatecas, and she dabbled in painting in a self-taught way, she studied painting and drawing at the Workshop "Julio Ruelas" and in "Ala 21" she studied a diploma course in Art and Textile Design and another focused in Museography at the Instituto Zacatecano de Cultura "Ramón López Velarde". After venturing into the arts and realizing her enormous talent to manage resources in favor of the Instituto Zacatecano de Cultura, she decided to take that remarkable step to the United States having already formed a family with daughters attending to high school and with limitations such as

language, the lack of money and with no relatives living there.

I have no family in the United States, I went to Los Angeles because I did not speak English and I know there are many Latinos there. I do not speak languages but painting has its own universal language and I have thrown myself into different spaces despite of languages, everything in life is a challenge and it is better to dare than to stop doing things. [10]

Tere contacted the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California and proposed a program of activities and workshops from his previous experience in the municipality of Concepción del Oro, where she founded a House of Culture in 1994. "I proposed them the program but they had no resources to pay me, so they put me in touch with people who could give me lodging and food. I like the management, I was the first to teach there, from 2001 to 2007". [11]

The first accommodation Tere found was in Santa Monica with a Jerez painter who lived with her daughter. She traveled more than an hour to Los Angeles to study at a Chicano school of engraving and painting where she learned engraving with Artemio Rodríguez and painting with John Montelongo. There she met many Chicano artists and their peculiar plastic proposals based on discrimination through pre - Hispanic and religious iconography; she also was in touch with local galleries and the Mexican consulate where she was offered a space to exhibit.

Tere also met a strong group of braceros for whom she made a blanket of 150 by 600 centimeters where you could see a peasant plowing the land with his children at his side; the painting became the banner of the group and they showed it in each demonstration and parade where they participated; the painting appeared in all the media, as a result, Tere obtained a lot of publicity and began to paint regional costumes for the participants at the Miss Zacatecas - Los Angeles contest, where the parents of the contestants asked the artist to represent images with the most representative of the popular culture of its region.

I was a landscaper, I made urban landscape of the city of Zacatecas and many municipalities in the dresses of the contestants. The dads of the girls paid for the dresses and almost cried when they saw all the images of their villages, they were moved and really excited, but for their daughters everything was foreign, they didn't identify with the places or with the culture and they were not excited at wearing those suits. Parents constantly struggle with that breaking feeling because it hurts to be away, they have their homeland in their minds all the time, but the children already have another culture and they are not part of that world. [12]

Zacatecan immigrants always cherish the love for their land, for people, for tradition, but these are not customs that they followed when they were in Mexico, the roots came later, with longing and loneliness, with isolation in another society; it is then that they look for identity symbols that help them to reaffirm their ties with the Mexican culture. "Traditions and customs, like altars of the dead, they did not

have them. What they carry with them is their home and they try to reproduce everything." [13]

Tere began taking English classes in Santa Monica, in one of the many free schools that the city offers to migrants from around the world, there she met artists from other countries, such as the Puerto Rican painter Monticelo, who had a gallery and organized international exhibitions, he invited her to exhibit in Germany and France. She was the only Mexican in the group and her work was well received, so much so that they opened the doors in other spaces such as Ecuador, Cuba, Japan and Mexico itself.

After two years of living in different houses, learning and strengthening techniques and establishing relationships with gallery owners, museums and a large Latin and Zacatecan community, Tere obtained his economic independence selling her work. She had worked on different subjects and she was very successful with paintings of virgins and saints, such as a *Child of Plateros* that she sold to a pharmacist and since the very moment she placed it above the counter, the clientele increased significantly. "I got the prints of virgins and saints and from there I copied them, I painted them as they were and people used to say they were alive, I had many moving experiences with those paintings." [14]

During his time in the United States, Tere Chávez obtained many professional satisfactions, such as entering the catalog of the most recognized Latin artists of the Museum of Latin American Art of Long Beach, together with José Luis Cuevas, for a work she donated for its collection, an engraving made at the Self Help Graphics and Art school. She participated in collective exhibitions of important galleries and she established contacts for individual exhibitions in other countries.

Throughout the years of study and work, Tere developed a style and a proposal that came to the abstract, she returned to Zacatecas with a wide trajectory, with a huge backup job, with many friends and despite the time in Los Angeles, his work It has no Chicano influence; she reaffirmed her objectives, her priorities and her culture. Because of her career as a Plastic Artist, the Instituto para la Mujer Zacatecana granted her in 2001, with the award of "Women who made their way in Zacatecas".

Technical studies in the United States

Intensive studies at an American university under strict training programs with habits where the student acquires knowledge, technical and reflexive skills as well as forms of behavior regarding the use and control of materials requires knowledge of the English language, daily attendance during rigorous schedules of work and the fulfillment of cyclic stages of training subject to chronological programs without the possibility of faults. To carry out these studies the student must pay their payment fees as well as accommodation and all of their expenses during their stay in the United States; few can do it and become fluent at the English language, required for communication at American universities.

One of the youngest Zacatecan creators with a recognized career is Plinio Avila, who conducted the Training of

Professional Printers at the Tamarind Institute, from 1996 to 1997. This Institute is located in a division of the College of Fine Arts of the University of New Mexico in Los Angeles California. The knowledge acquired during that residence gave Plinio the technical training to become the General Coordinator of the Centro de Gráfica Museograbadado, belonging to Manuel Felguérez Museum of Abstract Art, located in the city of Zacatecas, since 1999.

From the Tamarind Institute the doors were opened at the Miró Foundation and the training I had allowed me to develop Museograbadado. Although this education was really technical and not artistic, it helped me directly in my career as a printer, and as an artist it helped me by simply allowing me to travel. [15]

Although the United States is an important reference in contemporary art, for all the reasons cited repeatedly in this essay, its proximity to Mexico could give an advantage to Zacatecan artists to complete their technical and aesthetic training; however, this training is not necessarily among the best in the world since it is not complete and because it does not cover all the aspects required by an artist today; both technical skills and theoretical and aesthetic support. In the particular case of Plinio, who underwent a complete training program and gained excellent knowledge about engraving, he says, "The disciplinary system of art education in the United States is somewhat rigorous and obsolete." [16]

The knowledge and technical skills allow the artist to present his projects effectively through the most appropriate means to achieve the maximum degree of creativity and expression. Plinio perfected many of his technical skills in the United States and, in addition, he had the opportunity of meeting and working with important artists from different parts of the world such as Ralveroni, Nathan Oliveira, José Bedia and Donald Sultan, for example.

When Plinio came back to Zacatecas he worked hard and he was given the opportunity to direct the newly created Museograbadado. In spite of the enthusiasm and the excellent work program with important artists such as José Luis Cuevas, Vicente Rojo and many more, the new coordinator faced an audience disinterested in contemporary art, who does not understand or wants to approach to him. The diffusion task in Zacatecas was a great challenge since there were not even recipients.

Once the artist, whoever he is, has contact with the most internationally recognized creators, his already improved training in the technique seeks a follow - up in theory and content. The horizons are then opened to the old world. Plinio completed his training in Belgium but he never left Zacatecas completely. With new knowledge, this time theoretical, he began the No Museum project, a traveling space to show current art with artists from Mexico City and abroad where a new audience, including aspiring artists, has the opportunity to approach and getting acquainted or, at least meeting current art proposals.

The Zacatecan art student is very far from the places where contemporary art is exhibited and his only references are the local museums and galleries. This limits his vision and his

work for a simple matter of comparison and lack of ambition. Museums in the states are an expense to the government and their policies are based on sexennial whims, while the galleries in the states respond to the existing market that is itself uninformed and in the best case they sell some modern art, but in general only decorative. That happens with any city far from cosmopolitan cities: Campeche, Piedras Negras, Morelia, Nebraska, Albuquerque or Sarajevo itself. In the whole country of Mexico, only the D. F. has a market and exhibition places for contemporary art. [17]

During Plinio's studies in Belgium his work took a conceptual sense and the multiple cultures in which he has been immersed throughout his life have also influenced certain reflections. "It has given me perspective about what is interesting in art and what is not. Getting this insight, lets me know if what I'm doing is worth it or not." [18]

Zacatecas is still far from the main centers of artistic activity in the world and, both the public and the fan of artistic creation, have no contact with those centers. Plinio keeps working in the city because of the deep affections he finds in it, but the most important work in his professional career is outside, mainly between Belgium and Mexico City.

I am in Zacatecas for personal reasons, definitely not for professional reasons. And since I will always be connected with Zacatecas, I take advantage of it in order to generate a movement and openness to contemporary art. Museograbadado and Muno have allowed a greater openness to contemporary art. It's almost a kind of social responsibility, in the end, it's my homeland. [19]

Although Plinio's work is multicultural, he has never left his own culture or his identity: "The multicultural public that has no cultural affinity for the work, can actually have an intellectual affinity." [20] Most of its collectors focus on high - class young adults, around their forties, Belgians from the Flemish area, Dutches, Germans, Mexicans from the Federal District and Latin Americans in the United States.

Each culture has a different background and my work is more appreciated for the technical - aesthetic value in Zacatecas and province, while in D. F. and other countries is appreciated for the conceptual content. In general, the older public is accustomed to traditional modern art, painting, sculpture and graphics. For them, it was more than enough the achievement of understanding and accepting abstract art. The openness to contemporary art no longer deserves their intellectual effort. However, it is no surprising that young people do not make this effort either, but it becomes then an obligation of local artistic education to train critical thinking and not just technical training. [21]

Each one of the artists commented on in this essay has its own language to which they have arrived in very different ways and whose careers have been built and consolidated in different countries. However, all have passed through the United States of America and this step has influenced their way of seeing and understanding current art; they, by themselves, have built a part of the history of that necessary training in the world of plastic arts and their experience

constitutes examples of life and tenacity. Achievements in the arts cost a lot and they are not easy, it is not just about knowing, studying, learning, building relationships and contacts, forging a name and a trajectory but to consolidate each of these elements and the whole set of them.

The United States is close and although it is not very accessible, it is not impossible to break through in this country, it is necessary tenacity like the one shown by the mentioned artists who constitute examples of the richest trajectories and of more interesting proposals, each one very different and original.

The migration in the plastic arts, from Zacatecas to the United States of America has not always been a constant and it was born in the twentieth century, precisely when that country became a point of reference for artists who revolutionized art from Europe and had to migrate persecuted for the repression of war. Zacatecas then, already has a link, increasingly rooted in the northbound road through different and varied connections with the various fields of the world of plastic arts. The artists who carry their culture, their work and their plastic language have established a point of reference with Zacatecas, where the names of important artists are already referential.

Undoubtedly, this migration will continue through the means that students have or search for and, surely, their influence will continue in the construction of the art history of both countries.

- [1] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte at Hotel Santa Rita, September 2010, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [2] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte at Hotel Santa Rita, September 2010, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [3] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte at Hotel Santa Rita, September 2010, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [4] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in the Painting and Engraving Workshop "Julio Ruelas", March 2008, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [5] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in the Painting and Engraving Workshop "Julio Ruelas", March 2008, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [6] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in the House-Studio of the teacher Ignacio Vera Ponce, March 2008, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [7] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in the Casa Estudio of maestro Alfonso López Monreal, March 2008, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [8] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in the Casa Estudio of maestro Alfonso López Monreal, March 2008, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [9] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in the House-Studio of the teacher Tere Chávez, February 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [10] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in the Study House of the teacher Tere Chávez, February 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [11] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in the Study House of the teacher Tere Chávez, February 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.

- [12] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in the Study House of the teacher Tere Chávez, February 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [13] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in the Study House of the teacher Tere Chávez, February 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [14] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in the Study House of the teacher Tere Chávez, February 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [15] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in Museograbo, Manuel Felguérez Museum of Abstract, January 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [16] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in Museograbo, Manuel Felguérez Museum of Abstract, January 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [17] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in Museograbo, Manuel Felguérez Museum of Abstract, January 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [18] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in Museograbo, Manuel Felguérez Museum of Abstract, January 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [19] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in Museograbo, Manuel Felguérez Museum of Abstract, January 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [20] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in Museograbo, Manuel Felguérez Museum of Abstract, January 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.
- [21] Interview with Sofía Gamboa Duarte in Museograbo, Manuel Felguérez Museum of Abstract, January 2014, Zacatecas, Mexico.