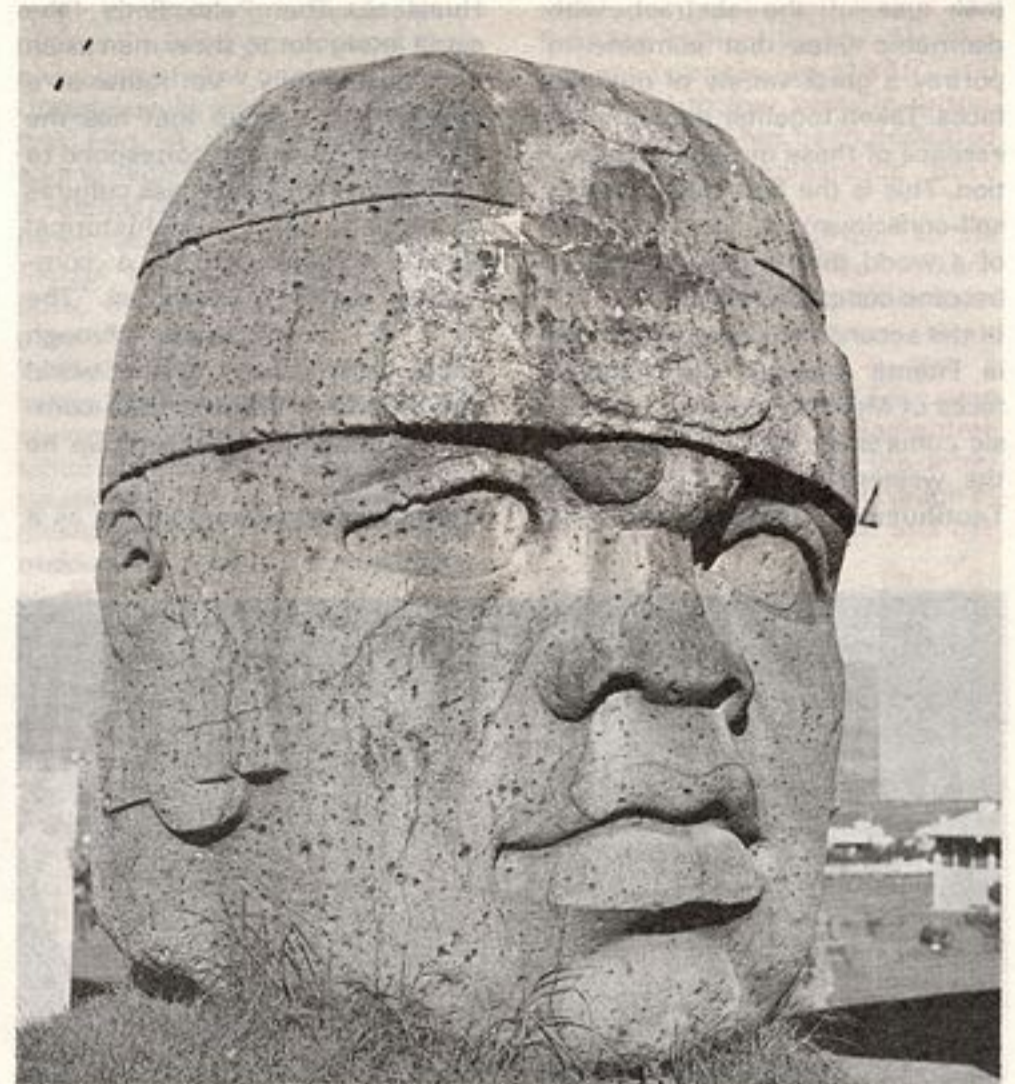


Books

dealing with her subject matter allows the author an overall view of each group's artistic creation. De la Fuente wrote: "Among the technical activities of art historians, one that is often forgotten or pushed aside is the definition, classification, description and organization of the artistic creation of a given culture."

In *Olmeca Colossal Heads* and *Men of Stone* the author combines the catalog form with an iconographic method similar to the formal analysis of Erwin Panofsky's



49



PATHWAYS TO CONSCIOUSNESS

Beatriz de la Fuente, *Pathways to Consciousness*, U.N.A.M.

Pathways to Consciousness is prehispanic art researcher Beatriz de la Fuente's tenth book. Her first work on the subject, *The Sculpture of Palenque* was published in 1965.

In this book De la Fuente developed two basic lines that have been present throughout her work: a systematic inventory of the material she is analyzing, followed by a series of aesthetic deliberations on the same subject matter.

In *The Sculpture of Palenque* the author began outlining a series of hypothesis on Palenque art, using material from archeological research carried out at the site. Through analysis she established a series of stylistic features specific to Palenque culture. Some of her published material is in catalog form, such as *Olmeca Monumental Sculpture* and *Huasteca Stone Sculpture*. This means of

to approach the cultural content of her subject matter.

In *Pathways to Consciousness* De la Fuente's research unfolds in catalog form and then the material is analyzed from a philosophical perspective. The method seems effective in that it allows her to reach the essence of prehispanic creativity.

Beatriz de la Fuente used the title *Pathways to Consciousness: Faces in Prehispanic Art* to conjure up an image of a mounting stairway where man becomes gradually conscious of himself and of the universe through the images of other human beings. "In the faces we see not only subtle expressions of consciousness but also the artistic expression of the culture in which they were shaped."

De la Fuente starts out on her path of study with faces in which there is a will to represent a human figure even though the design still doesn't show intent to represent a specific individual. The author places Mezcala and Chontal masks at this point of the path because of

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their use of the abstract, with geometric lines that combine to portray a great variety of outlined faces. Taken together the common essence of these masks is abstraction. This is the first step in man's self-consciousness, "in the midst of a world that is just starting to become comprehensible."

In the second step on her path, De la Fuente analyzes the sculpted faces of Mexican highland preclassic cultures as well as those from the western part of the country: Teotihuacan, Oaxaca and the

Huasteca. There she finds "the same intent not to show man as an individual entity," but rather as a member of a group that has the stylistic features that correspond to the regions in which these cultures developed. Man has historical significance as part of a community, not as an individual. "The level of consciousness through which man relates to the world around him is based on the common experiences of the group he belongs to."

The author analyzes portraits as a

third step toward consciousness, because "a fundamental development is expressed in portraits. Man finds himself, and recognizes the self in both its essence and its changes." De la Fuente considers the Olmeca colossal heads, some of the sculpture from central Veracruz, certain figures from Xochipala and an abundance of Mayan sculpture in this category. She includes both stucco and clay figures, as well as some individual figures in the mural of the battle of Cacaxtla.

Deities such as the Cocijos, Ehecatl, Tlaloc or Chac are placed in this category. Even though their shape is still modeled on the human form, their fantastic features are emphasized in an attempt to grasp the non-visible, that which has no real features because it is divine. At this level of consciousness, "man starts out on his path towards the spiritual. Man finds that his own nature is a changing one, and he goes beyond it."

This is where Beatriz de la Fuente's



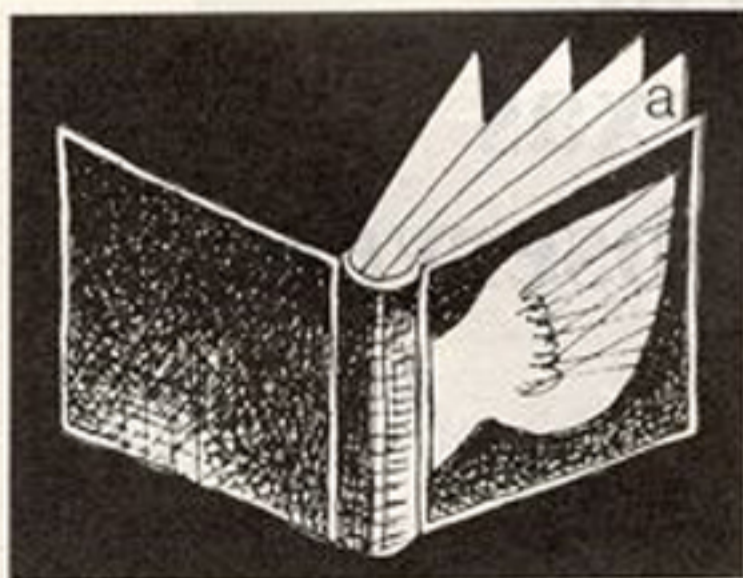
La convencion. Smiling figure in clay from central Veracruz. National Museum of Anthropology. Photo: Jose de los Reyes Medina



Engravings in stone (number 26) from Yaxchilan, Chiapas

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From the moment an individual stands out from the rest of his group there is introspection; man comes to know himself and thus, begins to know his relation with the world around him. Man goes on to deeper levels of understanding which no longer deal only with himself and his natural environment but go beyond him into the world of the supernatural. This further step along the pathway to consciousness points to his own need to transcend the representation of his immediate natural surroundings and to distinguish between the divine and the human by means of symbols. "Supernatural imagery leads man to an existential understanding that the realm of the sacred, though it may originate in man himself, becomes something entirely different."

At this stage in her research the author analyzes the figures of gods whose form originates in the human figure, such as the Aztec deities Coatlicue, Xochipilli and Mictlantecuhtli.

The fantastic is analyzed as an even more subtle level within the realm of the supernatural. "It expresses man's more existential relation with the divine; it is a cognizant relation in which man commits himself to making real a conceptual abstraction."

mounting pathway reaches its full meaning. Once man starts out on his journey towards the spiritual, he uses the figures he makes of himself to move everybody in that direction. This transcendent vision of man is what makes an artistic expression valid beyond the time and geographical space in which it was produced.

The author successfully leads us, step by step, through the labyrinths of the human psyche. From man as a member of a group to man who conceives the supernatural based on his own essence and being.

The treatment of the subject matter in this book certainly adds new dimensions to the history of art. Not only does De la Fuente classify an important portion of the faces and portraits of prehispanic art, she also develops areas that seemed to have been forgotten by most art historians.

The publication of a book like **Pathways to Consciousness** also points to the editorial development of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, UNAM. The book combines excellent research with high quality photographs of an ample sampling of prehispanic faces, in an attractive format and high quality printing. This book is alluring to both the layman and the specialist. ★

FIDEL CASTRO ON RELIGION

Frei Betto, *Fidel Castro and Religion: Conversations with Frei Betto*, Siglo XXI

A new Latin American best seller, second only to Nobel Prize winner Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Love in the Times of Cholera* was recently published in Mexico. In *Fidel Castro and Religion: Conversations with Frei Betto*, the author transcribes 23 hours of conversation between



grounded, but there is a reaching out toward each other from the very heart of both Christianity and Marxism. Neither gives an inch, yet they seem to reach deep understandings on such important subjects as morality, contemporary political and economic problems, as well as on the need to unite Christians and Marxists in the struggle for a better world.

The book gives us an important insight into Fidel Castro's ethical groundings. We learn about the influence his formal schooling had on him, particularly his experiences in grade school and high school at the best Catholic parochial institutions in Cuba. The highly principled ideas of Varela, Luz Caballeros and Jose Marti are obvious influences in Fidel's early development. This ethical component may be one of the more unusual aspects of the dialog.

Two of humanity's most important historical currents of thought and emotion, Christianity and Marxism, seen as irreconcilable by some, find new and surprising paths of understanding in these conversations. The issues are of interest for everyone sincerely concerned with the future of mankind, regardless of personal philosophies or beliefs.

These are some of the aspects that explain the book's success in Latin America. Instead of seeking simplistic solutions to complex problems, Latin Americans seem

open to exploring possible alternatives in order to develop their own point of view on the issues. Unfortunately, what I consider the first part of the book (the part ending with the second interview) is marred by repetitions on the different subjects. Though this is faithful to the original conversations, it goes against the overall pace of the book.

With the way this book has been selling, Latin American readers are saying once again that the only taboo is closing one's eyes to the issues and not fully exploring the diversity of points of view before making key decisions that affect us all. ★

Pantxika Cazaux

ON FREI BETTO

Frei Betto is a Brazilian Dominican friar who was born in the city of Bello Horizonte in 1944. He was active in the student movement by the early age of 13, and was in the national leadership of the Catholic Student Youth movement between 1962 and 1964. He studied journalism and was first jailed for his political activities in June of 1964, shortly after the military takeover. He entered the Dominican order the following year.

Along with studies in philosophy and theology he worked as a journalist and was active in the

resistance movement against the Brazilian military regime. He was arrested again in 1969 and sentenced to four years in prison. As of 1974 he has been dedicated to organizing Ecclesiastic Base Communities.

He is currently an advisor to the Sao Bernardo do Campo Workers' Pastoral, which is located in Latin America's most important steel-producing region. He is also a member of the Popular Education Center of the *Sedes Sapientiae* Institute. He is part of the International Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, and has



Frei Betto.

published at least twelve books, some of which have been translated into several languages.

the Cuban president and Frei Betto, a Brazilian Dominican friar and militant Catholic with deep Christian convictions.

The conversations between the two took place in May of last year and cover a broad range of religious topics. Other issues are dealt with along the way, such as Castro's childhood and education, and the assault he led on the Moncada military headquarters in 1953, which signaled the beginning of the end of Batista. They also talk about love as a revolutionary quality, the nature of Cuban democracy and the Latin American foreign debt.

The long dialog between the revolutionary and the friar is friendly and straightforward, yet always intellectually precise. They seem to warm up to each other as the interview unfolds, and the tone is stronger and livelier as the hours—and the pages—pass.

By the third interview Frei Betto's questions are more forceful and sometimes even provocative. The interesting thing is that Castro does not elude the friar, but instead goes into greater detail in ideas that had formerly been glanced over, or gives his views on touchy subjects that are particularly important today. This is an additional angle of interest for readers of this 369 page document.

Throughout the confrontation both characters display a wealth of knowledge and self-confidence. Each is sure of his own convictions yet at the same time interested in establishing closer ties that can be helpful to the Latin American people. Their positions are firmly



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DISEASES, OLD AND NEW

Ruy Perez Tamayo, *Old and New Diseases*, Siglo XXI

Old and New Diseases brings together material from a series of lectures Dr. Ruy Perez Tamayo delivered at the School of Medicine of the National Autonomous University of Mexico during March of 1985. The author maintained the style he used in his lectures, so the book is practically devoid of technicalities. Although scientifically precise, the writing is simple and direct, making this a medical text accessible to the layman. The book also makes for pleasant reading because of its photographs, engravings and abundant anecdotes.

The main theme in *Old and New Diseases* is the critique of the widespread notion that progress in medical science will eventually

lead to victory over disease and to a sort of health nirvana. According to the author, this idea has taken shape in the study of the history of medical progress. Perez Tamayo believes this conclusion is wrong even though the facts it is based on may be correct.

A state of perfect health for mankind is unrealistic for two basic reasons. One is that not all diseases are caused by external agents. Some result from human beings' constitution and development, from our anatomical and functional complexity. The second reason is that certain diseases change over the course of time. Some may change their features,

others come and go or even disappear entirely. And this is so basically because our pathology is to a great extent a reflection of our natural surroundings and of the conditions under which we live. Thus, despite technical and cultural advances, the only way man could possibly escape disease is if he ceased to be human and alive.

Perez Tamayo argues that we will never be free of disease, and that we must also be prepared to see much of it change. In support of his theory Dr. Perez Tamayo introduces a historical classification of disease in which he analyzes patterns of diseases throughout time, and comes up with four dif-

ferent groupings. **Constant** diseases are those that have been present since recorded history and have maintained the same basic characteristics and development. **Variable** diseases are the ones that have undergone dramatic changes over the course of time, becoming either chronic or less serious, but nonetheless, constantly present. The third category is that of **Historic** diseases. These exist in specific historical periods and have disappeared because of man's action against them (smallpox, for example), or for reasons as yet unknown (coreomania). **New** diseases are the fourth and last category. Some of these may

52



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also be **variable** diseases, and it is difficult to find precise patterns for them.

Dr. Perez Tamayo believes that many of the factors that actually determine the persistence, variation, appearance or disappearance of disease are little known. Among these factors he includes variations in personal hygiene and natural surroundings, changes in food and occupational patterns, changes in physical conditions, psychological tensions and stress levels, etc.

The author uses this framework to go over each category with examples.

The idea that pathology is dynamic, as changing and versatile as life itself, is emphasized. Many diseases change over time because they are not permanent and autonomous, but rather result from different living patterns and as side effects of the way man adapts to his surroundings. This is why disease will be with us as long as we live.

Ruy Perez Tamayo was born in Tampico, Tamaulipas, in 1924. He took his degree in medicine at the UNAM School of Medicine and went on to get his Ph.D. in immunology at the National School of Biological Sciences of the National Polytechnical Institute, IPN. He has held teaching and administrative positions at several important national institutions, and has taught at Latin American universities in El Salvador, Nicaragua

and Guatemala, as well as at the National University of Colombia. He has lectured at the universities of Washington, Colorado and Kansas, and at Yale, Johns Hopkins, Rochester and Harvard. He has also taught in Geneva and at the Jimenez Diaz School in Madrid.

The author is presently on the editorial board of several medical and scientific journals, including the **International Review of Connective Tissue and Experimental and Molecular Pathology**. He has published fifteen books and numerous articles that have appeared in magazines, newspapers and medical collections. He was awarded the National Science Prize in 1974* and became a member of the National Guild in 1980. ★



TOWARDS ARMAGEDDON

Generals for Peace and Disarmament, **The Arms Race Towards Armageddon, Siglo XXI**

This book is a unique document of our times. Thirteen NATO generals and admirals from eight European countries came together to voice their concern about the ominous escalation in the nuclear arms race.* These high ranking officers have all held high military command positions and acquired an exceptional insight into the nature of the East-West conflict and the dynamics of the Western alliance's military policies. This led them to the conclusion that there is little time if we hope to avoid Armageddon.

The book's importance lies mainly in the fact that it is written by a group of very well informed people who actually had a part in world nuclear planning. After a cold-headed analysis of the facts they concluded that more weapons do not offer more security. They believe dissuasion is possible without nuclear weapons, and that it is much more important to work toward building confidence than to continue with the arms race, which they regard as highly dangerous and profoundly immoral. The activities of these men point to ways of achieving these goals. The most important up to date was a meeting they organized between former NATO and Warsaw Pact generals. Siglo XXI also published the final statement issued at this meeting.

This book will surely be important to those concerned with the arms race and who are looking for authorized sources on the subject. ★

Arturo Arias

* The officers are: General G. Bastian (West Germany), General J. Christie (Norway), Marshall F. da Costa Gomes (Portugal), General M.N. Hardbottle (England), General G. Koumanakos (Greece), General Jose Lima (Portugal), General M. Herman von Meyenfeldt (Holland), Admiral M. Papsyrou (Greece), Admiral A. Papathanassiou (Greece), General N. Pasti (Italy), General A. Sanguinetti (France), General M. Tombopoulos (Greece) and General G. Vollmer (West Germany).

HOT OFF THE PRESS: THE NEW AND THE NOTEWORTHY IN MEXICAN PUBLISHING

Declive (The Slope) by Sergio Galindo (Fondo de Cultura Economica)

Mexico City and Acapulco are the setting for this novel. A man's past determines his behavior as he moves in an unreal, ghost-ridden world, incapable of taking time out to reflect on his own life. The author's skill allows the reader to penetrate the family world of Juan Rebollar, a well-intentioned man who, nonetheless, cannot avoid the destruction of someone near to him who has other worlds within himself. Galindo was born in 1926.



Isla de raiz amarga, in-somme raiz (The Island of the Bitter Root, Sleepless Root) by Jaime Reyes (Fondo de Cultura Economica)

These two books in one give us an important look at the early work of a splendid poet. The currents of love and restlessness of modern Mexican life flow through his words. These books place Jaime Reyes, born in 1946, in the forefront of contemporary Mexican poetry.



Fragmentario (Fragments) by Rafael Torres Sanchez (Fondo de Cultura Economica)

The author's style captures the tidbits that can make life either joyous and luminous, or demential. The poems are profound and ingenious. Life's excitement and dizziness are constantly renewed in them, as the 33-year-old poet learns to live in the sunlight of poetry.



Horizontes de la musica precortesiana (The Horizons of Pre-Conquest Music) by Pablo Castellanos (Fondo de Cultura Economica)

This is a systematic survey of pre-Conquest music, from Tepexpan man to Cuauhtemoc. These Horizons was developed from documentary sources that formed the basis of this solid analysis of pre-Columbian musical instruments and their uses throughout different historical periods. In addition, the last chapter provides an overview of the survival of pre-Conquest music through colonial times and into the present.

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FONDO DE CULTURA ECONÓMICA

Mujeres y vida cotidiana (Women and Everyday Life) by Teresita de Barbieri (Fondo de Cultura Economica)

The author seeks to capture the essence of the feminine condition through the analysis of women's everyday life. Ms. Barbieri studied lower, middle and upper class women in Mexico City and extracts a common denominator for all: domestic labor. In the final chapters she analyzes who it is that ultimately benefits from this labor.

54



escribir con luz (Writing with Light), photographs by Hector Garcia with an introduction by Juan de la Cabada (Fondo de Cultura Economica)

This book reproduces some 50 photographs that illustrate the extraordinary work produced by Hector Garcia between 1940 and 1978. As much a documentary statement as an appropriation of the magical moments in life, Garcia's camera has captured the events and images that make up Mexico. This book is ample proof of Garcia's importance as a photographer.



Science and Nature

THE MEPSICRON, A MEXICAN BREAKTHROUGH IN ASTRONOMY AND TECHNOLOGY

The dividing line between basic science and technology is gradually blurred. Just as science can't do without the new tools provided by advanced technology, many modern technological developments would be unthinkable without the inspiring role of the basic sciences. Nevertheless, there are people in the developed countries who maintain that basic science is not a profitable means of generating technological advances. The story

of the "Mepsicron" serves to prove them wrong.

The "Mepsicron" project got underway in the late 70s to meet a specific need in the field of astronomy. Scientists wanted to observe external galaxies, quasars and faint objects in the sky through a medium-sized telescope with sophisticated light analyzers. Presently, in-depth astronomical observations are carried out with large telescopes through high collection of light and the use of highly sensitive detectors. While large telescopes are extremely expensive and are thus found only in the wealthiest countries, this is not the case with the detectors. High technology research offers the opportunity of developing relatively inexpensive detectors.

In the late 70s the Institute of Astronomy of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, UNAM, had a 2.1 meter diameter telescope at the Astronomical Observatory in Baja California. Its additional equipment consisted of one Echelle spectrograph, which permits very accurate light-color analysis. In order to use these instruments for extra-galactic research, a high sensitivity, low internal noise, good resolution and extended dynamical range detector was necessary, but none of the most recent television cameras fulfilled these requirements.

The project to actually build the new detector took off in 1981, and was named shortly afterwards "Mepsicron." The name is an acronym for Microchannel Electron Position Sensor I (and) CRON (time). The success was partially related to previous experiences in television technology, which at the time was one of the most advanced techniques for astronomical observations. A series of key experiments were carried out with the cooperation of the Space Science Laboratory at the University of California-Berkeley in order to demonstrate that a very high quality detector was possible. Later, the emphasis was on improving and optimizing the design. An electronic system able to process the enormous amount of information provided by the "Mepsicron" was also designed and built.

While still on an experimental basis, the "Mepsicron" became operational in 1983 in the Baja California Observatory. A group of technicians tried to guarantee optimum performance of the equipment and to observe its reactions through time and under special operating conditions.

A great amount of information has been gathered in the last three years, some of which will serve to correct critical design and technical aspects of the equipment. Thanks to the scientific results obtained, those difficult conditions of the first years will change for the better with a special laboratory currently under way. This will allow for new technological solutions and further advances.

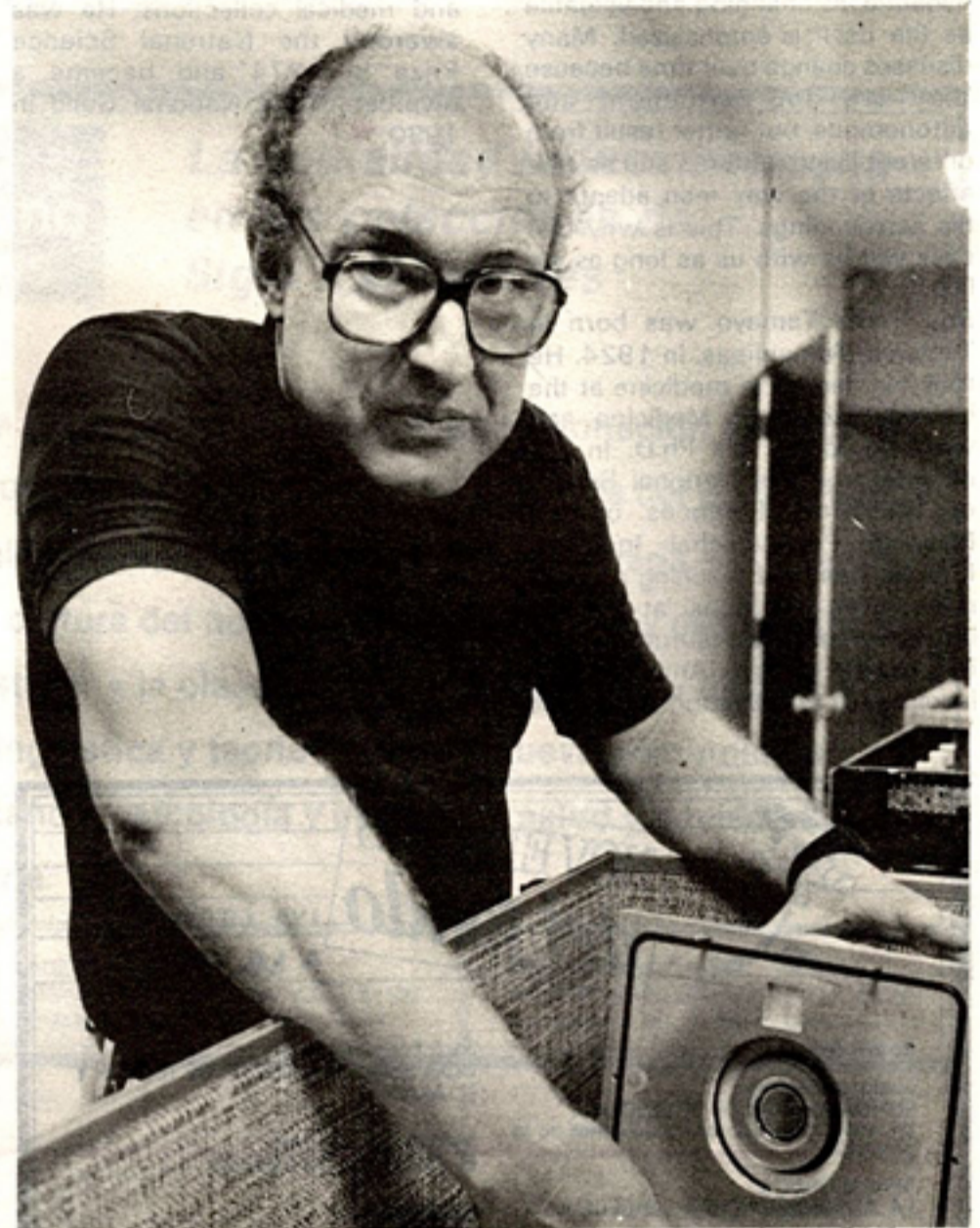
While the first detector had one of the highest resolutions ever achieved with electronic sensors,

today a new design is ready that is compatible with a resolution two times higher, and research is underway to achieve a resolution four times higher than the original device.

One of the problems that appeared during the experimental phase was the insufficient stability of the special light-sensitive film: the photocathode. Experiments are still under way in order to guarantee a more stable regime.

An additional pleasant surprise is that "Mepsicron" turns out to have applications in scientific and technological fields besides

astronomy. Because of its flexibility, it can easily be applied to an electronic microscope in order to supply high quality images of the micro-world. Experiments carried out in UNAM's Institute of Physics showed that Mepsicron is able to provide information that is beyond the scope of more conventional technologies. This is basically related to its wide dynamical range, i.e. the capacity to simultaneously detect faint and bright details of an image. Interesting experiments in biology and medicine are also ready to be carried out.



Dr. Firmani in his lab. Photo by Nadia Bindella.

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