



# THE FRANCISCO GOITIA Museum

*José Alvaro Ortiz Pesquera\**

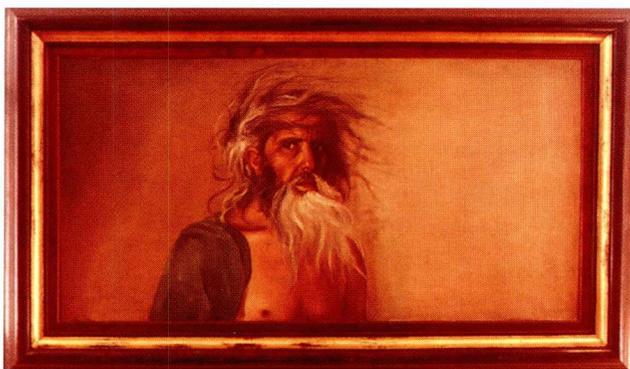
The word “museum” is part of people’s daily life in Zacatecas. The baroque beauty and regal architecture that surprise the visitor at every turn of a corner are complemented by craftsmanship and artistry that over the centuries have produced a wealth of work, today displayed in magnificent venues. One such venue is the elegant pink stone mansion that houses the Francisco Goitia Museum, the permanent home of work by contemporary Zacatecan painters.

Only a ten-minute walk from the cathedral—itself a product of New Spain’s baroque period—the museum was orig-

used as a museum with a permanent collection of a splendid selection of works by Zacatecas’ most prestigious visual artists who occupy an important place in the Mexican art world and are widely rec-

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with agonizing Germanic romanticism. A brilliant student of Mexico City’s Academy of San Carlos, he was noted for being inventive, biting and an able caricaturist. Later, he traveled to Germany to complete his studies at the University of Karlsruhe Art School. He worked under painters Mayerbeer, Klinger and Stuck, and Arnold Böcklin was a decisive influence. On his return to Mexico in 1898, he had his first exhibition in the Academy of San Carlos. For a few years he was part of the group of notable intellectuals who published the magazine *Moderna*, which printed the most advanced modernist thinking. From then on, he con-



*Self-portrait*, Francisco Goitia (oil on canvas) 72 x 123 cm., c. 1955, Francisco Goitia Museum Collection, INBA.



*The Starving Horse*, Francisco Goitia (oil on canvas) 68 x 128 cm., c. 1955, Francisco Goitia Museum Collection.

inally planned and built by Spanish architect Máximo de la Pedraja, commissioned by then-Governor Leobardo Reynoso, as a governor’s mansion. Surrounded by vast, lovely gardens, the house was inaugurated in 1948 and was the official governor’s mansion until 1962 when it was transformed into the People’s House, used as a guest house for distinguished visitors, a dormitory for poor students and public offices.

In 1978, the building, property of the state government, was remodeled to be

\* Architect and director of the Francisco Goitia Museum.

ognized internationally. In concert with the National Fine Arts Institute and some of the painters themselves, about 170 works by Francisco Goitia, Julio Ruelas, José Kuri, Rafael Coronel, Pedro Coronel and Manuel Felguérez were brought together to show over 100 years of contemporary Mexican art.

#### THE PAINTERS

**Julio Ruelas** (1870-1907). A master, his macabre, painful drawings are always treated with poetic sentiment coupled

centrated on illustration. In 1904, he went to Paris where he learned etching, his last, brilliant specialty.

**Francisco Goitia** (1882-1960). Goitia did not do a substantial amount of pictorial work, but his paintings have been classified as exceptional. The canvas *Grandpa Jesus Christ* (1927) has been recognized as a masterpiece of Mexican easel painting. From his first sketches to his last works, his palette was influenced by realism and expressionism, which he adopted for a long period, evolving later toward a typically Mexican classical expressionism.

He studied at the Academy of San Carlos with the great teachers of the end of the nineteenth century, José María Velasco, Julio Ruelas, German Gedovious and Saturnino Herrán. In 1904 he traveled to Barcelona, Spain, where he worked with Francisco Galfí.

Upon his return to Mexico in 1912, he joined Pancho Villa's revolutionary forces. He later dedicated most of his life to working as a teacher and rural promoter among indigenous peoples, particularly with anthropologist Manuel Gamio. Together with the painter's work, the museum displays photographs showing the desolate studio in Xochimilco where he lived until his death.

**Pedro Coronel** (1923-1985). Coronel's work is part of an expressionism of simplified forms inspired by the colors of pre-Hispanic and primitive art. He studied painting and sculpture in the Esmeralda School, where he later taught. He lived some years in Paris where he fre-

quented the ateliers of the painter Breuer and the sculptor Brancusi.

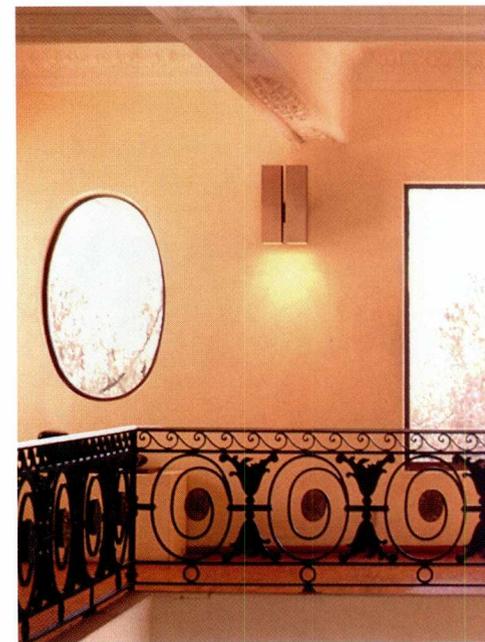
His work has been shown in Mexico, Tokyo, Osaka, the United States, Italy, Brazil and Belgium. In 1983 he donated his international art collection to the city of Zacatecas, where it is now exhibited in another magnificent museum that bears his name in the Ex-College of San Luis Gonzaga, where his remains are also laid to rest.

**José Kuri Breña** (1913). Kuri studied at the UNAM National School of Visual Arts. Considered one of Mexico's most important contemporary sculptors, he has participated in many exhibitions nationwide. Most of his work —realist all— is life-size, with a preference for materials like onyx, bronze, marble and rock crystal.

**Manuel Felguérez** (1928). Working in different mediums, Felguérez both paints and sculpts and is known as a creator of authentically avant garde originality. He

went to the UNAM National School of Visual Arts and studied sculpture in Paris with Ossip Zadkine. In 1954, he received a grant from the French government.

Among other distinctions, he is a full member of the Academy of the Arts of Mexico. In 1975 he was awarded the grand prize at the Thirteenth Biennial of Sao Paulo, Brazil and a Guggenheim fellowship. Officially made an illustrious

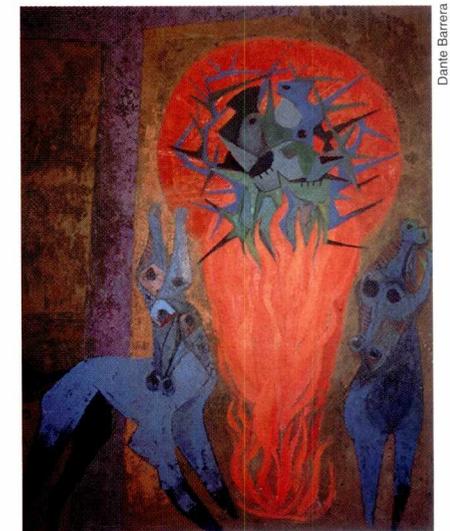


*The Pilgrims*, Rafael Coronel (oil on canvas) 175 x 250 cm., 1970, Francisco Goitia Museum Collection.



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Pedro Coronel, *Earth Weeping* (oil on canvas) 326 x 245 cm., 1975, Francisco Goitia Museum Collection, INBA



Dante Barrera

citizen of Zacatecas by an act of the state Congress in 1987, in 1988 Felguérez received the National Prize for Art and in 1993 was designated creator emeritus by presidential decree. This year, Zacatecas will inaugurate a museum named after him.

**Rafael Coronel** (1941). Considered one of the clearest representatives of the new Mexican expressionism, Coronel aban-

doned his studies in architecture to devote himself entirely to painting. He studied at the UNAM National School of Visual Arts.

Through four decades of fruitful creative work, he has exhibited his paintings both individually and collectively on the five continents. Outstanding among the shows are the 1965 Eighth Biennial of Sao Paulo, which awarded him the Cordoba Prize for the best young Latin American painter, and the 1974 First International Biennial of Figurative Painting in Tokyo and Osaka, where he won first prize. In 1978, he and his brother Pedro were declared favorite sons by the state government and the Autonomous University of Zacatecas.

Like his brother before him, he decided to donate his collection of Mexican art to the city of Zacatecas in 1990 for the creation of the Rafael Coronel Museum in the exquisite Ex-Convent of San Francisco.

## A LIVELY MUSEUM

Consistent with the tradition of making Zacatecan museums spaces open to the general public where people go frequently, the Goitia Museum has developed a far-reaching program of cultural dissemination. Therefore, in addition to the permanent collections on exhibition, it organizes temporary shows to make a place for new expressions of visual arts from Zacatecas, the country and the world. These shows are supplemented by an ample program of lectures, concerts and other artistic events.

The museum is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. On Sunday, it is open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For the minimal entrance fee of 10 pesos, the visitor can enjoy both the wealth of the visual arts and the contrasts among Zacatecas' most noted painters, as well as the beautiful gardens that welcome him before he even enters the museum proper. **NVM**



José Alvaro Ontz Pesquera

The Pedro Coronel Room. *Crucifixion and Apostles Series*.

The Manuel Felguérez Room.



Dante Barrera



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