

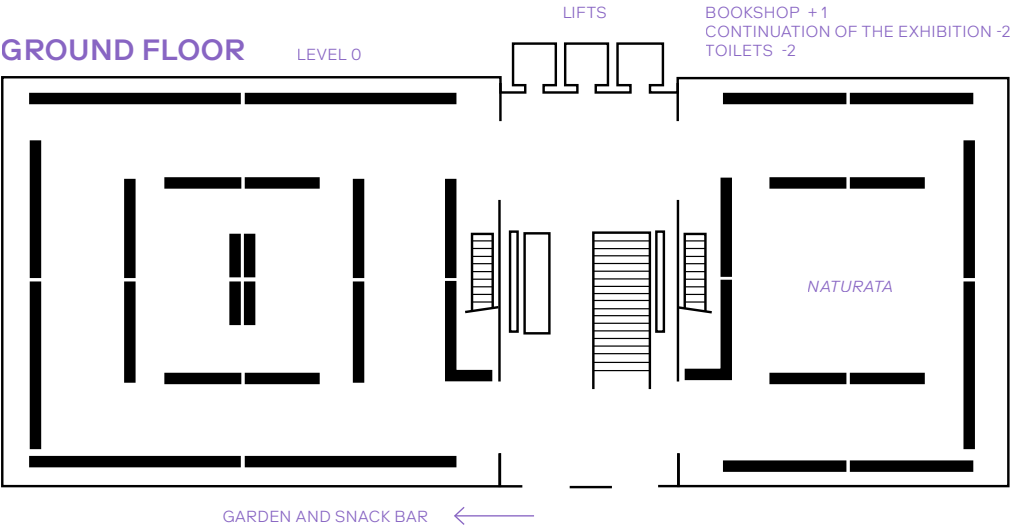
# GRACIELA ITURBIDE

Exhibition  
February 12 –  
May 29, 2022



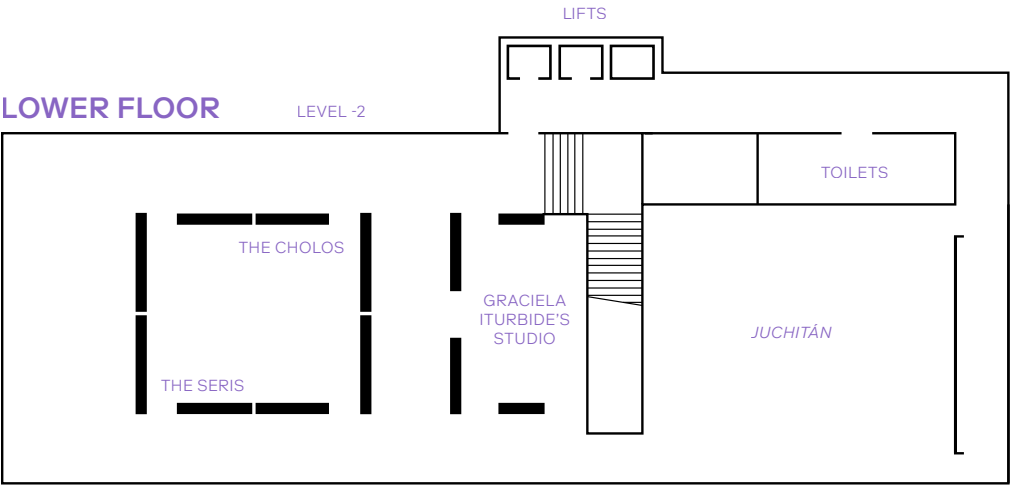
Fondation *Cartier*  
pour l'art contemporain

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THE FONDATION CARTIER'S GARDEN IS FRAGILE. WE KINDLY ASK YOU TO FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES DURING YOUR VISIT TO HELP PROTECT ITS ECOSYSTEM.

THE REFRESHMENT AREA IS OPEN FROM TUESDAY TO SUNDAY, DEPENDING ON THE WEATHER, IN THE FONDATION CARTIER'S GARDEN. PAYMENT BY CREDIT CARD IS PREFERRED.



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We value your opinion!  
Scan the QR code to give us your feedback  
on our exhibition.



# GRACIELA ITURBIDE HELIOTROPO 37

To know more about the exhibition, feel free to ask your questions to our team of museum docents! Meetings points are also scheduled at 12 pm, 5 pm, and 7 pm (subject to availability).

**“To go off with my camera, observe, capture the most mythical part of man, then go into darkness, develop, choose the symbolism... I think photography is a ritual for me.”**

Winner of the Hasselblad Award in 2008, Graciela Iturbide is a major figure in Latin American photography. Famous for her portraits of members of the Seri Indians (Sonoran Desert) and of women of Juchitán, the artist has gained particular renown for her photo essays on the indigenous communities and folk traditions of her home country of Mexico. She also brings a quasi-spiritual attention to the landscapes and objects encountered in her travels. This exhibition-portrait presents the two sides of Iturbide's body of work for the first time, providing a fresh perspective on it.

On the ground level, the exhibition unveils Iturbide's recent photographic work, which has rarely been seen until now. Since the early 2000s, her focus has gradually shifted from human figures to textures, materials, and light, revealing the metaphysical link connecting the artist to objects, nature, and animals. In 2021, at the Fondation Cartier's initiative, Iturbide traveled to Tecali, a Mexican village near Puebla where alabaster and onyx are extracted and carved. Here, she took color photographs of the pink and white stones during the polishing process.

On the lower level, the exhibition presents numerous portraits and photographs of popular festivals and traditional rituals produced during her travels in Mexico and around the world between the 1970s and 1990s.

This plunge into Iturbide's body of work continues in the privacy of her Mexico City studio, at 37 Calle Heliotropo. A series of photos of Iturbide's studio by the Mexican artist Pablo López Luz documents this space for reflection and work, a masterpiece designed by the architect Mauricio Rocha, whom the Fondation Cartier entrusted with the exhibition scenography. Playing with the materiality of the featured elements and the natural light penetrating the space, he has created an atmosphere conducive to contemplation.

# TIMELINE

## 1942

The eldest of 13 children, Graciela Iturbide was born in Mexico City on May 16. With an education punctuated by religious festivals and representations, from a young age, she became acquainted with the theatricality of Mexican folk rituals.

## 1962

She married the architect Manuel Rocha Díaz. Together, they had a daughter and two sons: Claudia, Mauricio, and Manuel.

## 1969–70

At the age of 27, she enrolled as a film student at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, where she discovered photography through the courses of Manuel Álvarez Bravo, becoming his assistant. This experience expanded her horizons at a time of great sociopolitical upheaval in Mexico.



Iturbide and Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Mexico City, 1970–71. Photo Paulina Tavista

## 1971

After the tragic death of her daughter, Claudia, at the age of 6, she separated from her husband and fully devoted herself to her art, which was therapeutic for her. For five years, Iturbide photographed hundreds of *angelitos* —Mexican children who have died too young and who, according to popular belief, go “straight to heaven,” having never sinned.



Graciela Iturbide, *Cemetery of Dolores Hidalgo*, Mexico, 1978

Iturbide was invited to Avándaro by the filmmakers Luis Carrión and Jorge Fons to photograph the rock festival, the Mexican Woodstock. This series was her first publication.

## 1974

She regularly traveled to Panama to cover General Omar Torrijos, among Latin America’s most famous revolutionary figures.

In parallel, she continued her many trips to remote Mexican villages: Ocumichu, Espinazo, San Agustín Etla, Cuetzalan, and more.

## 1975

For the first time, her work featured in an exhibition, *Tres fotografías mexicanas*, at the José Clemente Orozco Gallery in Mexico City.

## 1978

She was commissioned by the Ethnographic Archives of the National Indigenous Institute of Mexico to photograph Mexican indigenous populations, with the photographers Pablo Ortiz Monasterio, Mariana Yampolsky and Nacho Lopez. For a month, she lived among the Seri people in the Sonoran Desert on Mexico’s northern border with Arizona. This photo essay led to a 1981 publication entitled *Los que Viven en la Arena*. Disseminated throughout Latin America, this publication brought fresh momentum to ethnographic photography in the 1950s in Mexico.



Graciela Iturbide, *Los que Viven en la Arena*, Mexico, Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1981

She became a member of the Consejo Mexicano de la Fotografía, a collective of Latin American photographers and intellectuals created under the guidance of Pedro Meyer. The council held five Latin American conferences devoted to photography between 1978 and 1996. It helped expand reflection

on the conditions of production and dissemination of photographic work in Latin America. The council's principles and objectives stipulated that “the photographer, linked to their era and environment, is responsible, via their images, for interpreting the beauty and conflict, triumph and defeat, and aspirations of their people,” and affirmed that photographers were to practice “an art of engagement rather than escape.”

## 1979

Iturbide was invited by the artist Francisco Toledo to photograph the inhabitants of Juchitán, in his native region of Oaxaca. He wanted to hold an exhibition on this Zapotec community. She made frequent trips there over a ten-year period, living amongst its inhabitants. Her work was based on the participatory observation of their daily life, gaining trust that enabled her to photograph the private life of Zapotec women. The first photographs were exhibited at the Juchitán Cultural Center in 1980, and the final series was published in 1989.



Francisco Toledo, Oaxaca, Mexico, 1995.  
Photo Graciela Iturbide

## 1982

Iturbide exhibited in Paris for the first time, at the Centre Pompidou. The exhibition gathered some twenty photographs, mainly from the series *Juchitán*.

## 1986

Iturbide contributed to the photo publication *A Day in the Life of America*, edited by Rick Smolan and David Elliot Cohen. This project invited 200 photojournalists from around the world to capture a glimpse of American life with their lens. Iturbide made a series on *cholos*, communities of Mexican origin living in the United States, and in particular focused on the White Fence Gang of Boyle Heights, an East Los Angeles group whose members are deaf. Her photos illustrate the reinterpretation of Mexican culture and its symbols undertaken by *cholos*, the complexity of their identity, their marginality and experience as immigrants.

## 1987

She was awarded the W. Eugene Smith Memorial Fund, receiving this photojournalism grant for her work in Juchitán.

## 1988

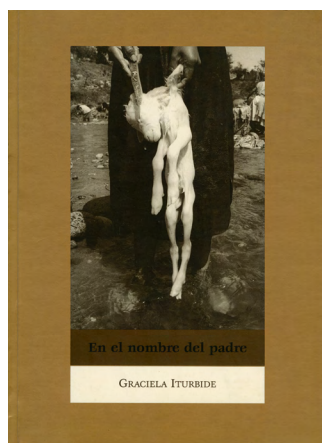
She won the Grand Prize, Mois de la Photo, Paris. The same year, she was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship for her photographs of funeral processions and rituals related to death in Chalma, a small town south of Mexico City.



Graciela Iturbide, *Primera Comunión*, Chalma, Mexico, 1984

## 1990

She traveled with the Cuban writer Sánchez Crespo to the Mixtec highlands of Oaxaca, observing ritual goat slaughter ceremonies. This work resulted in the publication of the 1993 book *En el nombre del padre*. The title is taken from the prayer offered by the Mixtec before the ritual begins. This experience marked a shift in her photography, which gradually became devoid of human presence to instead focus on symbols and abstraction.



Graciela Iturbide, *En el nombre del padre*, Ediciones Toledo, Mexico City, 1993

The same year, Iturbide was invited by Doctors Without Borders to Madagascar, where she notably made a series of portraits of women with AIDS. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art presents the exhibition *External Encounters, Internal Imaginings: Photographs by Graciela Iturbide*.

## 1991

She won the Prix des Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie, Arles.

## 1996

She was invited by Francisco Toledo to take photos of the Botanical Garden of Oaxaca, undergoing restoration at the time. This marked the beginning of her *Naturata* series, published in 2004. The Museum of Contemporary Art of Monterrey (MARCO), Mexico, held her first retrospective: *Graciela Iturbide: La forma y la memoria*.

## 1997

She spent a month and a half traveling across the southern United States with the American poet Roberto Tejada, photographing the landscapes of Louisiana and Texas, before going to India for the first time.

Faced with the U.S. panoramas and Indian landscapes, she decided to photograph objects and symbolic forms that she encountered while roaming cities. In 1999, she returned to India and Bangladesh, this time photographing transvestite eunuchs, wrestlers, and prostitutes. Iturbide made a total of five trips to India, resulting in the 2011 publication *No hay nadie*, gathering images devoid of human presence made between 1997 and 2010.

## 1998

Her work was presented in a major retrospective titled *Images of the Spirit* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania.

## 2006

Iturbide photographed Frida Kahlo's bathroom, in the Casa Azul where the artist was born. After her death in 1954, Diego Rivera had shuttered the bathroom holding the painter's personal belongings, including corsets, orthopedic braces, crutches, and political posters of Lenin and Stalin. This commission by the museum fifty years later resulted in the series *El baño de Frida*.



Graciela Iturbide, *El baño de Frida*, Coyoacán, Mexico, 2006.

## 2007

Iturbide went to Rome and Sardinia. These travels would lead to the publication *México-Roma*, juxtaposing images of objects made in Mexico between 1974 and 2009, and in Rome in 2007.

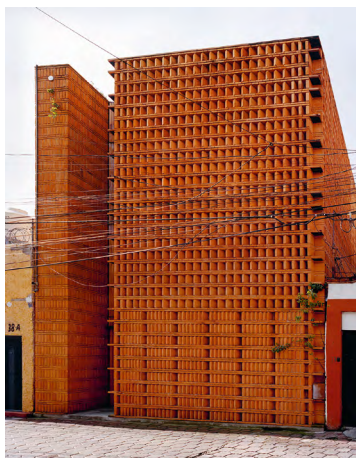
The retrospective *The Goat's Dance* at the Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, presented the main series made by Iturbide in Mexico and the United States.

## 2008

Iturbide received the Hasselblad Award, photography's highest distinction worldwide, in recognition of her career.

## 2016–17

At her request, Iturbide's son, the architect Mauricio Rocha, created her studio in the Coyoacán neighborhood of Mexico City, at 37 calle [street] Heliotropo. The all-brick building of seven by fourteen meters rises over three levels. Iturbide wanted a space shielded from outside gazes, conducive to contemplation and work.



Graciela Iturbide's studio, Coyoacán, Mexico, designed by architect Mauricio Rocha. Photo Pablo López Luz.

## 2019

The exhibition *Graciela Iturbide's Mexico*, at the Museum of Fine Art, Boston, was devoted to her series on indigenous communities and Mexican rituals.

## 2021–22

The Fondation Cartier presents *Heliotropo 37*, the first major exhibition in France devoted to Iturbide's entire body of work, from the 1970s to today. Her son, the architect Mauricio Rocha, designed the scenography for this major exhibition-portrait.

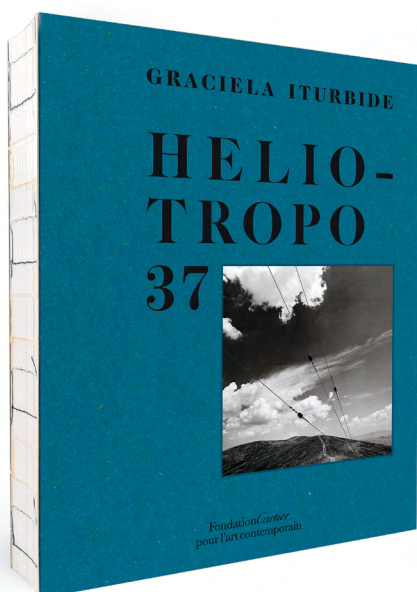
For the exhibition she traveled to Tecali, a village near Puebla where alabaster is extracted and carved, to make a new series, specially in color—a rare event in her career.



# BOOKSHOP

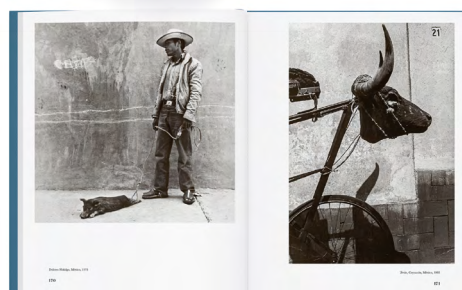
Sold at the Fondation Cartier's bookshop on the mezzanine (first floor), and on:  
[eshop.fondationcartier.com](http://eshop.fondationcartier.com)

## CATALOG OF THE EXHIBITION



### GRACIELA ITURBIDE, HELIOTROPO 37

Publications Fondation Cartier pour  
 l'art contemporain, Paris  
 French and English versions  
 Hardback, 23,5 × 29 cm, 304 pages  
 250 color and black-and-white photographs  
 Price: € 45



## ALBUM AND BY-PRODUCTS



### ALBUM OF THE EXHIBITION

Publications Fondation Cartier  
 pour l'art contemporain, Paris  
 Bilingual version French and English  
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## NEW ESHOP



You can also find all of our publications,  
 a selection of by-products, and the exhibition album,  
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Discover the Nomadic Nights & Nights of Uncertainty program:

- online on [fondationcartier.com/en/live-shows](https://fondationcartier.com/en/live-shows)
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- online on [fondationcartier.com/en/family-young-audience](https://fondationcartier.com/en/family-young-audience)
- or inside the Young Visitor's Guide available at the reception desk of the Fondation Cartier.

# 2022 EXHIBITION PROGRAM

In 2022, the Fondation Cartier travels the world and look forward to seeing you in Paris, Lille, Milan, Boston, New York, Shanghai, Tokyo, Mexico City, and Sydney.

Go see our information and exhibition program, in France and abroad, on [fondationcartier.com](https://fondationcartier.com)

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The Fondation Cartier is open from Tuesday to Sunday, from 11am to 8pm.

Closed on Mondays. Late closing on Tuesdays, at 10pm.

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