

Federación Mexicana de Universitarias A.C.

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"EDUCATING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM: WOMEN'S MUSEUMS EMPOWERING GIRLS AND WOMEN"

"THE WOMEN'S MUSEUM IN MEXICO: AN OPEN BOOK FOR THE PEOPLE"

Dear friends and colleagues,

The idea of founding a women's museum in Mexico was a long-term goal. Since I was eleven years old, I wanted to be a teacher. Originally, I planned to study law to teach citizenship. Afterward, I decided to study History, to understand the present by learning about the past. Throughout my career as a teacher and historian, I have worked towards providing clear and accessible knowledge, and to raise awareness of women's history.

As a feminist, defender of women's rights, in the "Decade for Human Rights Education" of the United Nations, I presented the project to create a Women's Museum, to show the injustice and discrimination women have faced, and the struggle for each one of their rights.

The proposal was supported by several institutions, organizations and artists: The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Mexican Senate, and the local Congress of Mexico City, among others. The Mexican Federation of University Women made this project their own.

I spent 15 years raising funds to make it possible.



Facade of the Women's Museum

Finally, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) granted us the building to house the museum, and provided financial support to establish the first and only Women's Museum in Mexico.

The UNAM gave us the premises which used to be the university press.

We had a pre-inauguration by the president of the International Federation University Women (IFUW), Louise Croot, and the Dean of our University, José Narro Robles.



Five years later we needed more space, an auditorium, to house our activities and our growing library. This time Mexico City's government donated the adjacent land, and the UNAM carried out the building project.



Expansion of the Women's Museum

The Women's Museum has the objective of reviewing Mexican history to show women's participation in the construction of the nation, from the prehispanic era to the present day. Our purpose is to make visible women's work and valuable contributions.

We promote a culture of equality between women and men, where all members of society can develop their potential. We advocate a culture of peace, a new mentality that overcomes patriarchal beliefs and any type of discrimination; we stand not only for tolerance, but for respect and the proscription of violence. In order to achieve these goals, three parallel actions must be undertaken:

1.Update the legislation in order to be coherent with international treaties that our country has subscribed. Women's human rights must be known by both authorities and citizens, in order to be rightfully complied.

- 2. The establishment of public policies with a gender approach and with the necessary budget.
- 3. Proper education in the classroom and outside the classroom, with gender consciousness. That is the purpose of our Museum.

We want to empower girls and women, make them conscious of their rights. Women's development will lead to progress; women have the power to establish new cultural systems.

The Women's Museum is an open book for the people: a place accessible to everyone.

We have 10 rooms in our permanent exhibition. It is an interactive Museum with videos, 3D recreations, interactive computers and original art pieces.

The first room is dedicated to explain the concept of Equity as a universal principle of justice and harmony. It is not enough to recognize the legal equality between men and women: to enforce the law it is necessary to establish the conditions for women to be able to exercise their rights.



Room 1. Equity, universal principle of harmony

The second room is dedicated to the Prehispanic Mexican culture. Ancient Mexicans had a dual cosmic view. Their world was divided in two equal and balanced parts, one male and the other female. Each male god had its correspondent female goddess.

However, in practice, women didn't participate in political life.

Women's roles was limited to child bearing and domestic labor.

In Maya City-States, there were some exceptional female rulers.

In this room we have a collection of prehispanic sculptures.



Room 2. Dual cosmic view of ancient Mexico

The third room is dedicated to New Spain's Marianism. During the three hundred years of colonial life, Marianism, meaning imitation of the Virgin Mary, was the role model for women. There was no middle ground for them; their behavior could either be seen as self-renunciation or sin.

In this room, museum visitors are shown videos illustrating the lives of women that took place in the private sphere. They lived secluded in their family homes, in convents or nunneries, in foster houses or brothels.

In this Room we have an original eighteenth century sculpture or a virgin.



Room 3. New Spanish Marianism. Women at home

The fourth room is dedicated to the women who fought for the independence of Mexico. Women participated actively in the struggle, but only few upper-class women are remembered for their contributions.

Thousands of women's names are lost to anonymity, yet they played a key role in feeding and nursing male soldiers, as well as fighting during the war. Some were victims of rape and some were executed.

In this room we have 19th century lithographies.



Room 4. Women Insurgents



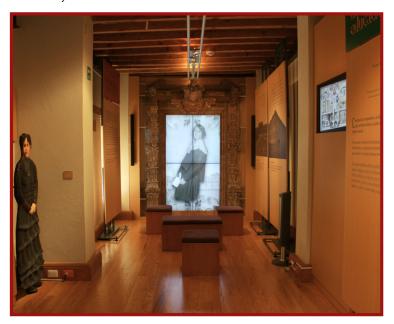
The fifth room is dedicated to the history of women's education.

Women's lives did not change significantly in the first few decades after the Mexican Independence. It was not until the triumph of the Liberal Reform, in 1867, when traditions from the ancient regime began to be dispelled.

Women's participation began to be considered as something positive, in order to trigger changes in society. The Mexican State began to perceive the education of women as a necessity, so women could raise good citizens.

free elementary and secular education: the Secondary School for Young Women; the Arts and Crafts School for Women, and the College for Teachers. From that point onward, women could have access to an education similar to that of men's, not only religious education, which used to be the case. Now, they could be admitted to university; this was truly a cultural revolution.

In this room there is a reproduction of the door from the original University of Mexico in 1551.



Room 5. Liberty and education

In the late 19th century and early 20th century, women organized political clubs against the dictatorship of president Díaz. The participation of women teachers was very important; they raised awareness of the injustices; organizing anti-reelection clubs and participating in various revolutionary groups. They collaborated in

The sixth room is dedicated to the teachers and revolutionaries.

political planning, and they spread new ideals by publishing newspapers. They also took up arms, led troops and gained ranks

in the military, such as colonel.

The triumph of the Liberal Reform, meant the establishment of Women were a key driving force during the Mexican Revolution, however they were not recognized as citizens. Revolutionary leaders were afraid that the Catholic church would persuade women to vote against a revolutionary government.



Room 6. From teachers to revolutionaries

The seventh room shows the struggle of women for citizenship. The struggle for women's vote started in the 19th century and continued through the middle of the 20th century. Numerous associations emerged. Three workers' and peasants' conventions were organized; they formed the United Front for the Rights of Women, uniting 800 groups of women from all over the country, with 50,000 members campaigning for women's suffrage.



Room 7. Women's Citizenship

The eighth room is dedicated to the suffragettes and the United Front for Women's Rights, to recognize their struggle, highlight their actions and honor them. In 1947, the vote was granted to women in local level of states. Finally, in 1953, citizenship was achieved to all Mexican women, at the federal level.



Room 8. The suffragettes and the United Front for Women's Rights

The nineth room is dedicated to the outcomes of feminist movements from the Feminist Revolution to the beginning of the 21st century.

We include information of each decade: national and international historical context; legislation relating to women's rights; political and economic participation, as well as their situation regarding health, education and violence.

In the sixties, women's reproductive rights witnessed a worldwide breakthrough, thanks to the work of Mexican chemist Luis Ernesto Miramontes, inventor of the contraceptive pill, in October 1951.

The last room of the Museum is dedicated to the four Waves of Feminism: from Olympe de Gouges's demands for the political rights of women, during the French Revolution, to women's suffrage movements throughout the world, to women's struggles in the present day.

Today, out of 193 countries in the world, only 28 are led by women. It is likely that this year Mexico will vote for a female president for the first time in our history.



Room 9. From the feminist revolution to the present time

This tenth room ends with the fourth wave, which denounces sexist violence, femicides and sexual harassment. It also discusses the importance of the decriminalization of abortion.



Room 10. Waves of Feminism



and human rights, so our visitors can explore in these matters Women and literature; Comic vs Violence; among others. further.



Clementina Díaz y de Ovando Library

Our Museum is a cultural center, in which we organize all kinds of cultural and educational activities: courses, workshops, seminars, book presentations, art exhibitions, concerts.

Among our activities we've have organized international seminars such as The State and society facing welfare issues (November 2022); the national seminar Gender violence and the Feminist Agenda 2030 (November 2023); and the lecture Women in film (January 2024).

Also, we have had book presentations. One of our most recent books is The impact of the pandemic on Women's Lives.



Presentation of the book The Impact of the Pandemic on Women's Lives, september 2023.

We have a specialized library and a bookstore, in women's history We have organized workshops such as First steps to face justice;



Workshop: Comic vs violence

We always have exhibitions: as Always Leonora, an exhibition of the sculptures by the surrealist artist Leonora Carrington; Puras Evas by the cartoonist Cintia Bolio; The clothesline project to denounce violence by the artist and activist Mónica Mayer; and a photography exhibition from the National Union of Domestic Workers.



Exhibition: Always Leonora, Leonora Carrington, 2022.

Art performances also take place in the Museum. For example, a night dedicated female choruses, chamber orchestra concerts, and dance performances, among others.



Museum night: Female chorus Yanaldoo, October, 2023

We also help promote health campaigns, such as cancer awareness, as well as campaigns to prevent other diseases which affect women. Very importantly, we provide legal advice to women. We also organize psychology workshops.



Workshp: First steps to fase Justice



Press conference: Heading to the 25N. Victims of femicide.



Free mammograms for International Breast Cancer Awareness Month

A society's growth and development is directly affected by women's role and status within that society. Those countries that invested in women's education, have experienced a significant growth overall.

We promote the creation of other women's museums in different states throughout the country, with the itinerant exhibition "The struggle of women's rights in Mexico".

We are convinced that there cannot be peace in the world if there is no peace between men and women, that's why we promote a culture of peace. As our motto states "The future of women shall be the world's future".

The best investment that a nation can make is women and girl's education, because of the multiplying effect they have in society. People can go as far as their education allows them to.





museo de la mujer

MARCH 2024













EVENTO PRESENCIAL





