

## The Women's Museum

Patricia Galeana\*

Today is historical as thanks to our National University the first woman's museum in Mexico has been created, the second in Latin America

Since the United Nations called for programs on human rights education, we launched a proposal to create a Woman's Museum, for the purpose of disseminating historical knowledge on the situation of women and thus contribute to generate a new culture of respect for human rights.

Today, thanks to the support of our rector, Dr. José Narro Robles, this project can be fulfilled, so that the history of the women of Mexico ceases to be a forgotten history and their contribution to the building of the country, be valued.

The concretion of our museum during the celebrations of our Independence Bicentenary, of the centenary of the first social revolution of the Twentieth Century, and within the frame of the XXXth International Federation of University Women Triennial Congress, the first world feminist organization, is of major significance.

We also wish to point out the importance of having the Museum site at the house of the first University Press, founded in 1937 under the rectorate of Luis Chico Goerne, with the objective of printing university publications of the highest quality at the lowest cost to reach the largest possible number of readers.

According to the testimony of our Mexican Federation's Honorary President for life, and University Chronicler, Dr. Clementina Díaz y de Ovando, Dr. Rubén Bonifaz Nuño and Francisco Monterde worked here, as well as the master typesetters Gracida –fondly called the “Juanitos”-. Our professors Justino Fernández and Francisco de la Maza passed long hours reviewing the galleys of the publications of the Aesthetics Research Institute, with the diligent aid of our beloved Clemen, the

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first university woman to head a research institute and the first female member of the Board of Governors.

Museums of the Twenty First Century do not necessarily have as their objective to exhibit grand collections as in the past, notwithstanding to undertake teaching activities for cultural dissemination through exhibitions, courses and workshops that interact with society.

We want an interactive Cultural Center that, besides having its permanent exhibition and lectures, hosts book presentations and cinema cycles as well as other activities aimed at generating a culture of equality, a new mentality to prevent violence and overcome all types of discrimination.

For this first stage we have prepared a small sample exhibit of what our Museum shall contain, with a journey through our history with a gender focus, from the original cultures up to the achievement of citizenship by the Mexican women. We have had the invaluable support of Dr. Rodolfo Rivera for the museology, and thanks to the help and support of Engineer De Pablo and UNAM Works and Construction Department staff, we have this space ready in the midst of the building's restoration.

A nation without history is like a person with Alzheimer, not knowing where they come from, nor where they are headed; a population will advance as far as its education will allow; thus the importance of having a Women's Museum, understood as an open book for the people. That is why Shirin Ebadil, Peace Nobel Prize winner, affirms that there should be a Women's Museum in every country of the world.

Our endless gratitude to our *Alma Mater* and to our Rector for making the existence of this space devoted to women, possible in Mexico.