




# Flor Garduño

Mexican, 1957.



“Garduño is erudite, witty, energetic, and kind. She is well read and well-traveled. We always laugh when we are together.”

-Spencer Throckmorton

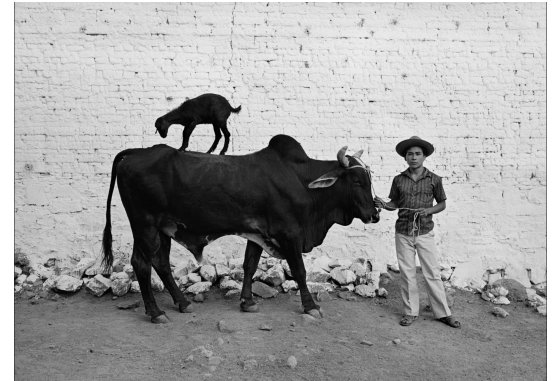


# Intro

When she was five years old, her family moved to a farm(hacienda) outside of Mexico City. Garduño's father had a strong love for animals and for life in the country. He often took his children on walks to point out the animals, and nature around them.

In her childhood, Garduño's family had a pet deer, dogs (one of whom was actually a waylaid coyote), and twenty birds.

Garduño has ever since been fascinated with animals, seeing them almost as alter egos of people. perhaps, from the pre-Columbian belief in the ability of animals and humans to be transformed into each other.



This appreciation of nature stayed with Garduño.



# Early Beginnings

While at university she met Hungarian photographer **Kati Horna**. Horna is mainly known for her photos of the Spanish Civil War taken between 1937 and 1939 for an album commissioned by the Spanish Republic. Her work is characterized by the influence of the principles of surrealist photography and her own moving approach to photojournalism and documentary photography.

Horna's style and mentorship greatly influenced Garduño's later work.

Garduño then trained as a printing and darkroom assistant with **Manuel Álvarez Bravo** (regarded as perhaps the greatest Mexican photographer of his era), where she learned the techniques of silver, platinum, and palladium prints.



Bravo's Work





# Finding Her Way

In 1981 she began working at the department of Public Education under the supervision of photographer Mariana Yampolsky.

During this time she visited Mexico's countryside to photograph rural communities for primary school textbooks.

She was deeply touched by the difficulties faced by the indigenous population that she encountered on her travels, and has since referenced traditional Mexican life, iconography and folklore in her work.



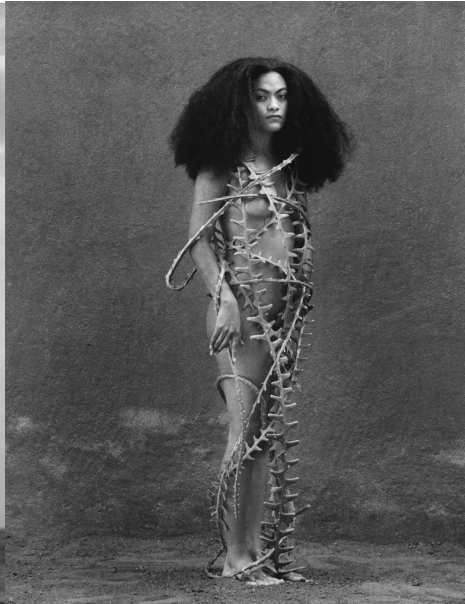
Garduño's works deal primarily with the female body, Latin-American themes and mythology, as well as the sensuousness of the body and organic items such as flowers and pomegranates.

Garduño's focus on the female form is heightened by its coupling with texture and high contrasts of light creating ethereal compositions.



The Elemental Feminine.

“I use the body to tell stories,  
to recreate myths  
and personal dreams”





Although images are usually minimal, they are “elegant and richly suggestive.”

She gives creative and dream-like perspective, that elicit a “second look,” and contemplation. Her technical skill is always clear and adds to the quality of each print. It is from this technical skill that she is able to make her own rules, with the goal of evoking emotion resembling revelation.

She shows women as both as idealized and mysterious creatures, but also as powerful and self-fulfilled beings.



(LUAG Image)

*Canasta de luz [Basket of Light]*

Gelatin silver print, printed 2008.

17 3/8 x 13 1/2 in. (44.1 x 34.3 cm).

Signed, titled, dated and annotated in  
pencil on the verso.

This image shows an indigenous teenage girl balancing a large basket of lilies on her head.

There is a lot of contrast making the lilies appear to glow from within and is a dreamy capture of the everyday using the female form and celebrating it with romantic and powerful lighting and composition.



# why?

I was drawn to this photo by Garduño because as an artist and photographer, I can see the clear influence that her fine arts training has had on her photography. The composition is classic as well as the Chiaroscuro that is used for a dramatic and three-dimensional effect. As a result there is something mystical /ancient about this photo in a modern and “feminine” way that is immediately captivating.

It is also texture rich from the basket, her embroidered clothing, and the delicate lilies that are drooping off the basket highlighted by the black background. The girl is looking at the camera with a stoic yet challenging expression. This is juxtaposed with the delicate flowers and the fact that she is a young girl. However, her stance is strong and open unlike the painting by Alfredo Ramos Martínez(next slide) in which the girl is carrying the lilies on her back with shoulders hunched and seems burdened by the task.



*Calla Lily Vendor (Vendedora de  
Alcatraces)*, 1929

Oil on canvas

45 4/5 × 36 in

116.3 × 91.4 cm

Alfredo Ramos Martínez



She has also done work in Guatemala, Ecuador, Bolivia, Switzerland, and Poland but keeps elements of Latin American culture while facing universal themes.

Garduño's photography has been exhibited in over 35 museums including the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson, the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, the Museum of Modern Art - New York and Houston, the Art Institute of Chicago, as well as numerous other museums worldwide.

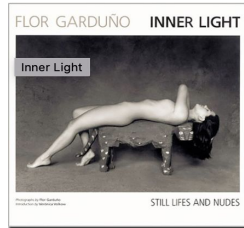
Flor Garduño(63 yrs. old) currently lives in Mexico and Switzerland with her daughter and her son.



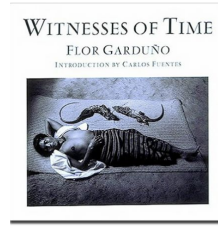
TRILOGY



FLOR



INNER LIGHT



WITNESSES OF TIME

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYhA45zRGIA>

Video uploaded May 27,2020 of Garduño talking about working on publishing two new books while in quarantine



# Bibliography

“Flor Garduño Recent Photographs.” *ThoughtGallery.org*, 2016, [thoughtgallery.org/events/flor-garduno-recent-photographs/](https://thoughtgallery.org/events/flor-garduno-recent-photographs/).

“Flor Garduño: Biography & Art Works: Huxley-Parlour Gallery.” *Huxley*, [huxleyparlour.com/artists/flor-garduno/](https://huxleyparlour.com/artists/flor-garduno/).

“Garduno, Flor.” *Museum of Contemporary Photography*, [www.mocp.org/detail.php?type=related](https://www.mocp.org/detail.php?type=related).

Garduño, Flor. “Flor Garduño: About.” *Flor Garduño | About*, [www.florgarduno.com/about](https://www.florgarduno.com/about).

Kaplan, Author: Daile. “Mexican Photography: Graciela Iturbide, Flor Garduño & the Influence of Manuel Álvarez Bravo.” *Swann Galleries News*, 19 May 2020, [www.swanngalleries.com/news/photographs-and-photobooks/2020/05/mexican-photography-graciela-iturbide-flor-garduno-the-influence-of-manuel-alvarez-bravo/](https://www.swanngalleries.com/news/photographs-and-photobooks/2020/05/mexican-photography-graciela-iturbide-flor-garduno-the-influence-of-manuel-alvarez-bravo/).