

Renowned Mexican Photographer Graciela Iturbide Is the 15th Member of the Leica Hall of Fame

NEWS

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The 2026 Leica Hall of Fame Award winner is renowned Mexican photographer Graciela Iturbide. Her work has been exhibited worldwide and is housed in major museum collections. She is among the most acclaimed and accomplished photographers alive today.

Iturbide was announced as the Leica Hall of Fame Award winner today at Leica's annual Celebration of Photography event in Wetzlar, Germany. An accompanying exhibition features over 50 of Iturbide's photographs and will be on display until January 2027. Iturbide's "Na' Lupe Pan" motif from her celebrated "Juchitán" series, Oaxaca, México, 1986, was selected as the Leica Picture of the Year 2026.



Juchitán, Oaxaca, México 1986 |

© Graciela Iturbide/Leica Hall of Fame Award 2026, Leica Gallery Wetzlar 2026

The exhibition promises a deep dive into Iturbide's life and work, which has focused primarily on Latin American culture and history. Her photographs also confront themes that extend far beyond Latin America, including death, how rituals shape our lives, and universal everyday experiences. Iturbide's work explores conflicts between culture and nature, tradition and modernity, and how identity and representation can fall apart, among other themes.

Graciela Iturbide was born on May 16, 1942, in México City, making her 84 years old today. She quickly grew to love photography as a child thanks to her father, a passionate amateur photographer. Iturbide married architect Manuel Rocha Díaz (1936-1996) at 19 and had three children.

In 1969, Iturbide began studying Film at the Colegio Nacional de México, the Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos (CUEC). In 1970, she was an assistant to professional photographer Manuel Álvarez Bravo. Iturbide spent much time with Bravo on trips into rural México, where she encountered many indigenous communities.



Jano, Ocumichu, México 1980 | © Graciela Iturbide/Leica Hall of Fame Award 2026, Leica Gallery Wetzlar 2026



Sonora Desert, México 1979 | © Graciela Iturbide/Leica Hall of Fame Award 2026, Leica Gallery Wetzlar 2026



The Film, Havana, Cuba 1974 | © Graciela Iturbide/Leica Hall of Fame Award 2026, Leica Gallery Wetzlar 2026



Quito, Ecuador 1982 |

© Graciela Iturbide/Leica Hall of Fame Award 2026, Leica Gallery Wetzlar 2026

It was tragedy, though, that ultimately led Iturbide to commit to becoming a professional photographer. Her and Díaz's six-year-old daughter, Cláudia, died. After this horrific experience, Graciela focused on her photographic dreams. By 1975, she held her first exhibition in México City. The following year, she held her first exhibition in New York City.

From the 1980s, she began to garner significant international attention and acclaim. She has won many major awards, including the W. Eugene Smith Award in 1987, the Hugo Erfurth Award in 1989, the Prix des Rencontres internationales de la photographie d'Arles in 1991, the Hasselblad Award in 2008, and more. Iturbide still lives in México City.



Graciela Iturbide | Portrait by Leica LATAM/Manolo Márquez

The new ongoing exhibit at Leica World in Wetzlar includes pictures that Iturbide captured across México and beyond, including photos from five series: “Juchitán”, with pictures from the Mexican city in the state of Oaxaca (1979–1988), “México Clásicas” (1974–2008), “Pájaros” (Birds, 1987–1998), “Desierto de Sonora” (Sonora Desert, 1979) and “Viajes” (Journeys), which was taken in Ecuador, Panama, Argentina and Cuba (1972–1994).

The Leica Picture of the Year 2026, “Na’ Lupe Pan,” is available as a limited edition print at Leica Galleries worldwide.

Iturbide is the 15th photographer to enter the Leica Hall of Fame since its founding in 2011.