



COLLABORATION AND ITS (DIS)CONTENTS

ART, ARCHITECTURE, AND
PHOTOGRAPHY SINCE 1950

EDITED BY
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Collaboration and its (Dis)Contents: Art, Architecture, and Photography since 1950

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Designed by Matthew Cheale

Cover Image:

Detail of *Untitled*, 2013 (from *Work*)
Courtesy of Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery.



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CHAPTER 2

MARGIN OF LIFE: POST-WAR 'CONCERNED PHOTOGRAPHY' IN MEXICO AND GUATEMALA, 1947–1960

ANDRIANNA CAMPBELL and ILEANA SELEJAN



2.1
Charles Alston, *A Real Home is Worth a Real Fight!*, 1943. Graphite on paper.

In 1973, Cornell Capa produced an audio-visual presentation and book, *Toward the Margin of Life: From Primitive Man to Population Crisis* for the Center for Inter-American Relations. Despite the timing of the show and the publication, the impetus for the project began decades earlier, in the aftermath of World War II, when documentary photographers sought novel forms in order to focus closely on social concerns and ethical responsibilities. In the West, in the wake of the massive devastation and atrocities committed, photographers conceptualised image making as a means of collective witnessing, organising new modes of production and formatting layouts.¹ Out of this context, organisations like Magnum Photos emerged, aiming to support socially engaged independent photographers.² Illustrated magazines such as *Life*, *Picture Post*, and *Paris Match* published much of these photographers' purportedly humanistic and humanitarian work. These magazines reached readers in the United States, Europe, and beyond with their significant

international readership. Whether affiliated with independent cooperatives and agencies such as Magnum or Black Star, or employed directly by photo magazines and related publications, established photographers such as W. Eugene Smith, Robert Capa, and Henri Cartier-Bresson transitioned from war reportage to human-interest documentary forms, setting the course for the types of narrative storytelling that would characterise a whole range of photo-journalistic practices during the 1950s.

In *The Margin of Life* and two other exhibitions titled *The Concerned Photographer*, Cornell Capa advocated for and first coined the phrase 'concerned photography', a humanistic, socially committed approach to documentary photography.³ Deeply affected by his brother Robert Capa's career and tragic death, by his own experiences as an Eastern European Jewish immigrant to France and later the United States, and by his travels in the United States and Latin America during the 1950s and 1960s, Cornell Capa argued for the preservation of 'individuality', 'truth', and 'human content' in 'humanitarian' photography, an approach he expanded upon in his practice and writing, as well as in aforementioned 'concerned photographer' exhibitions presented in New York in 1967 and 1972.⁴ Following the tradition of social documentary from Jacob Riis to Lewis Hine and the Farm Security Administration, concerned photographers worked locally, but sought to contribute toward the creation of a global awareness. Unlike their above-mentioned predecessors, whose images aimed to reflect the displacement in the lives of the urban, primarily immigrant, poor in the United States, or the destitute rural population unequally affected by industry and modernisation, concerned photographers refocused their lenses to contextualise indigenous populations in rural settings outside of the United States and also sought out success stories of people of color who had expatriated from the United States to Mexico.

Capa's perspective with its emphasis on centre (the industrialised West) and the 'margin' (the slowly industrialising countries south of the border) can be seen in the pages of *Life* magazine, where his photographs and photo-essays were regularly published. Yet, groups that were marginalised in the United States such as African-Americans deliberately emulated the *Life* aesthetic in order to cater to a burgeoning black middle class and to disrupt the well-meaning and also demeaning correlations between power, periphery, and skin color. Photographers for *Ebony* and *Color* magazines depicted African Americans fleeing Jim Crowism for the idealised post-revolution mixed society of Mexico. These shared photographic formats and ideals can also be seen in the exhibition *The Family of Man*, which was organised by Edward Steichen and shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1955. The photographs, sourced to a great extent from the archives of *Life*, travelled under the auspices of the United States Information Agency (USIA) to thirty-eight countries around the world, including to Guatemala and Mexico. This essay explores the utopian aims of the photographic gaze abroad to Latin America and the promotion of the United States' cultural paradigms as depicted in popular magazines such as *Life*, *Color*, and *Ebony* culminating in the exhibition. Our project is a dialogic or anaphonic approach to collaboration, in which we juxtapose two pictorially documented case studies of

the postwar yearning for human kinship in order to blur the margins and to explicate the projection of racial identity in canonical and acanonical histories of this seldom considered period.

TERMINOLOGY

Through magazine commissions these American and European photographers sought to visualise the world 'outside' of their most immediately familiar cultural territory, yet not unproblematically. Re-evaluated now, in the context of expanded photographic practices following the demise of the picture press, 'concerned photography' encapsulates the global itinerancy of the photographer and the photographs themselves as agents in a transoceanic discourse.⁵ The term can thus also be used broadly to note the changing approach to documentary photography in the Cold War era.

Concerned photographers looked to Mexico, Central and South America, regions relatively untouched by World War II. However, they were not the first to do so. Travel narratives exploring Mexico were prevalent in the late nineteenth century, starting with William H. Prescott's *History of the Conquering of Mexico*. Published in the United States and Great Britain in 1843, Prescott's history was animated by intricate engravings. Another pair of Americans, John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood, travelled to Mexico and Central America in 1839 and 1841, after which they also published an elaborately illustrated text.

While these authors documented their travels with engravings, by the end of the century photography dominated as the medium for documenting *exotic* sites and people. Charles Lumholtz's trip to Mexico in 1890 generated one of the largest archives of ethnographic photography. His work was published serially in *Scribner's Magazine* and the *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* in 1894 and then republished in 1902 as *Unknown Mexico: A Record of Five Years' Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madre; in the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco; and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*.⁶

Lumholtz and his assistants took more than 2500 photographs, all of which employ typological representations of the indigenous body in appropriate costume. The subjects are either posed with a cultural artefact, to identify their ethnographic status, or a measuring stick, to gauge their height. These tropes Lumholtz borrowed from nineteenth-century engravings. A representative example of his work is *Tarahumare Family Camping Under a Tree*, which depicts a sleeping man next to a seated woman holding a young child. In the foreground, a pot is askew and almost toppled over. The caption reinforces Lumholtz's textual descriptions of the Tarahumara as not unrelated to ancient cave dwellers, and also as intelligent.⁷ Some of their group do inhabit caves, but some camp, and others have moved on into homes. The photographs hold the tension of how to reconcile indigenous populations into a rapidly shifting present.

Lumholtz gave numerous lectures in London and New York in which he described the Tarahumara and the rapid differences of their cave-dwelling lifestyle. In Lumholtz's generation ethnographers did not question his stance, which approached habitation as progressive according to Western models. It is not until ethnographic Surrealists and, later, Structuralist anthropologists, Michel Leiris and Claude Levi-Strauss who used methodologies to introduce the concept of 'anthropological doubt', in which they positioned themselves in relationship to their subject instead of assuming an authorial stance.⁸ Yet ethnographic Surrealists still found themselves unable to reconcile indigenous groups in the present, and could view them only as living in the past.⁹ Though it could be hastily presumed that they shared with concerned photographers a humanist approach to the study of cultures, this is not the case. The grasp for an understanding of humanity marked a shared postwar aim; however figures such as Leiris relied on an anti-narrative approach. Leiris constructs his approach from the photomontage, which differs from the orderly presentations of the photo-essay.¹⁰ Concerned photographers deviated from other ethnographic photographers primarily by eliminating any references to themselves, juxtaposing the past and the present, zooming in for close-cropped images, rarely showing contextual backgrounds, and conveying an informality of portraiture not seen in previous examples hailing back to the history of engraving.

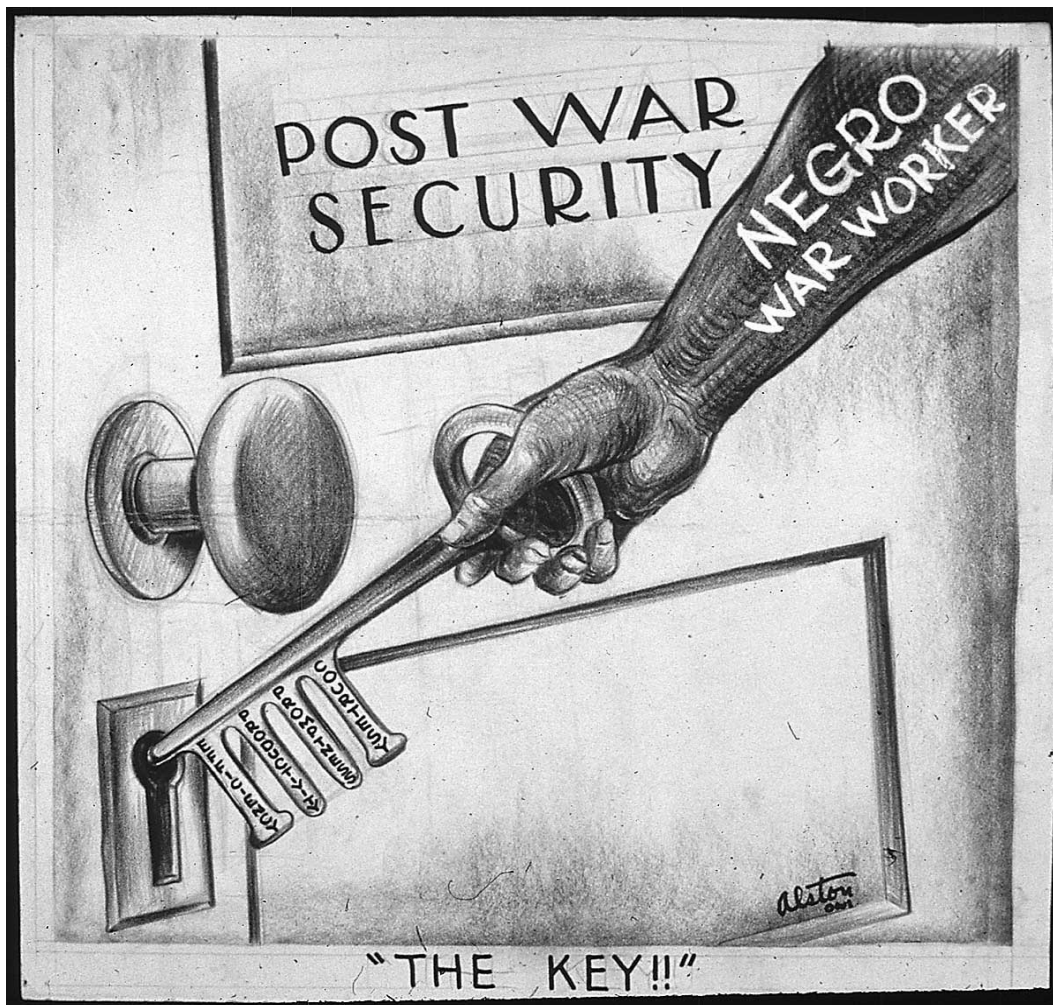
SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND IDENTITIES: COHABITATION UNDER MUTUAL THREAT

Although the phrase 'concerned photography' would be coined later, it was certainly a product of the Cold War and of the need to cohabitate under the mutual threat of a nuclear holocaust. This was the key impetus for reconsidering human relations outside of the developed world. The West, which defined itself as 'civilised', had failed to prevent almost two decades of war. The relative stability of the United States during the East–West stand-off of the Cold War contradicted an anxious coming to grips with a new world order. Latin America became the proving grounds for superpower struggles. Technophilia, which we see evidenced in advertisements of a new Atomic Age, also belied the fear of mass genocide and anxieties about the modern and progressive.¹¹ New technological achievements revolutionised the marketplace, but photojournalists scrutinised the human element instead. The *Family of Man* exhibition presented a selection of 503 photographs, sourced from over six million photographs originating in 68 countries.¹² Organised thematically, the display converged around portraits of families, communities, couples, and individuals intended as representative of 'all' generations and races, setting out didactic narrative routes with the nuclear family at their centre. Steichen's thesis, 'the relationship of man to man . . . alike in this world regardless of race, creed or color', was punctuated by a final photograph of species obliteration with an image of the atomic mushroom cloud.¹³

After the exhibition in New York, the show was packaged for travel, on a mission to promote American culture internationally.¹⁴ Working with Museum of Modern Art curators through the museum's International Circulating Exhibitions Program, the USIA prepared several traveling versions of the show, the first two opening in Guatemala City, where the United States had been involved in a violent regime change only the year before, and in Berlin. The exhibitions were meant as a show of power and also perhaps as an effort to bolster relations within those regions. Propagandising Steichen's vision of a world finally and universally at peace in parallel with the expanding United States sphere of influence, the traveling exhibition became a staple for the type of 'soft diplomacy' the government promoted throughout the Cold War.¹⁵ Yet despite the promulgation of universality and equality abroad, nowhere was the hypocrisy of United States foreign policy more pointed than in the legalised forced segregation of its own people.

During World War II, African American artists drummed up support for war bonds and for enlistment in the armed forces by making illustrations for the popular black press. The best examples of these are more than one hundred drawings by Charles Alston showing black soldiers fighting tyranny abroad so that they could return home to greater civil liberties and economic opportunities. Before the war, Alston's studio '306', located at 306 West 141st Street in New York, was a lodestone for the Harlem artistic community. As the carefree mood of the Jazz Age gave way to more sombre concerns, his propaganda illustrations revealed the era's democratic ideals.¹⁶ *A Real Home is Worth a Real Fight* (1943) (fig. 2.1) juxtaposes two images of most-likely the same young black man—one as a worker and the other as a soldier. He waves goodbye to his primly dressed wife and son who are standing in front of a large colonial home. The caption for the illustration informs the reader that 88,000 homes are being built for black tenants, presumably in exchange for military service as fighting men. In order to have access to real homes, black service men must fight in the war for themselves and for their families. Another of Alston's illustration from 1943, *The Key* (fig. 2.2), shows the hand labelled 'negro worker' unlocking a door marked 'Post War Security'. On the key wards, the attributes 'efficiency', 'productivity', 'promptness', and 'courtesy' when inserted in the door will be how blacks access post-war security. While many black war workers expected an egalitarian postwar lifestyle as promised in wartime propaganda, their hopes quickly soured when they returned home to face continued racial discrimination.

The heady anticipation of the period can be seen in the shift from the radical politics seen in previously established and traditional black publications such as *The Crisis* juxtaposed with the sumptuous spreads in *Ebony* magazine. The latter founded in 1945, by John H. Johnson for a black readership, emulated *Life* magazine's lush displays of celebrity culture, corporate success stories, and focus on the nuclear family akin to the family group in *A Real Home is Worth a Real Fight*. *Ebony*'s photography continued the aims of war time propaganda while it also appropriated the concerned photographic style of Capa and *Life* with close-ups of informally posed subjects who were at ease in their new-found comfort.



Ebony's layouts adopted the photo-essay format in order to tell stories with sparse textual information. The intertextual relationship realised the narrative, which for our purposes begins in 1946, part of a seamless participation in the postwar elation. A steady flow of headlines in *Ebony* highlighted the movement of African Americans across the border to escape racial persecution. These articles were by no means the main fare. *Ebony* favoured the wholesome mainstream aspirations of its readership. We compare the articles explicitly about Mexico as an egalitarian escape for blacks alongside those that advocated it merely as a vacation getaway, will allow the interstices—ideas articulated implicitly—to also have weight. What is conveyed by both the explicit and the implicit message is the anxiety surrounding the second-class reality of African Americans in the United States.

Following the war, the photographic search to picture equitable human coexistence surfaced in the pages of *Life* and *Ebony* magazines. Concerned photography was a means by which photographers could assert the importance of a human family. A family, who when displayed in the photo-essay format or in an exhibition, could exist outside of ethnic, communal, and even national borders. Both *Life* and *Ebony* were socio-politically conservative magazines, but inevitably had to confront the ideals of revolutionary shifts occurring south of the border.

POLITICAL STRUCTURES AND IDENTITIES: IDEALS OF REVOLUTION

In the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, government administrators aimed to upend the authoritarian and ethnically biased social policies inherited from colonial rule.¹⁷ José Vasconcelos, a writer and politician, advocated ideologically reshaping the Mexican racial colonial hierarchy in order to support the largely heterogeneous makeup of Mexico in the 1920s. His book, *The Cosmic Race* (*La Raza Cósmica*), lauded the paragon of the

Mexican *mestizaje*, a mixed race people of European, African, and indigenous American background.¹⁸ For Vasconcelos, this ethnic intermixture would lead to a true civilisation endowed with a vigorous intellect and spiritual adaptability. Moreover, he believed that racial hybridisation would ideally also bring cultural stability. Vasconcelos instituted re-education programs that conveyed this message throughout Mexico and abroad; however, despite his ideals, the continued destitution of the majority of Afro-Mexicans compared with Euro-Mexicans illustrated the difficulty of implementing his plans.¹⁹

These demographic conditions might seem less than ideal for immigrants looking south, but African Americans were not discouraged. Many were already the product of mixed-race unions. Because of the United States' unique implementation of the 'one-drop rule', all people with African ancestry were considered to be black, and therefore second-class citizens.²⁰ However, in Mexico, mixed-race individuals could see themselves automatically benefiting from living in Vasconcelos's ideal society. In theory, African Americans could live as their class, not their skin color, dictated. Racial identity in Mexico seemed at least more flexible, and the political establishment supported this rhetoric around race.

By mid-century, African Americans were attracted to the revolutionary sentiments radiating throughout the Americas. For instance, the popular singer Nat King Cole honeymooned in Mexico in 1948. *Ebony* sent photographer Griffith Davis to capture Cole and his wife, Marie Ellington, frolicking in Mexico City.²¹ In these photographs there is little allusion to racial barriers. Centred on the page in a gold lame bathing suit, Ellington could be the wife of any celebrity. Cole looks up at her longingly from a lounge chair. A large palm tree hangs over them, serving as a *genius locus* of the tropics.²² Even before the war, it was a well-known secret in the black community that Mexico was a destination for people of color. For example, Langston Hughes had spent a part of his childhood in Mexico, and he returned for a yearlong residence there in 1920. His father, James Hughes, was a practicing lawyer and property owner in Mexico, a position that would have been difficult to attain in the United States.²³ The elder Hughes was able to remain in Mexico during the revolution because of his skin color. It was this sense of opportunity coupled with postwar prosperity of returning black soldiers, artists, celebrities, and businessmen that made moving to Mexico an expression of revolutionary idealism.

A similar sense of light-heartedness and camaraderie can be seen in *Ebony's* article about Dorothy Michael, a Barnard College student who won a prestigious travel grant to study in Guatemala in 1959. On the first page, Michael is shown lifting a Mayan stela in order to examine it; the caption reads, 'Mayan Indians erected huge structures, some the equivalent of 20-story buildings, when Europe was still submerged in the Dark Ages'.²⁴ In many ways, the photograph upends Lumholtz's chronology that has the Tarahumara never leaving their caves to make the step into true civilization. Additionally, in this photo-essay Michael is frequently juxtaposed with white classmates or shown instructing Guatemalan students, with no allusions to the country's current socio-political problems. The American intervention in Guatemala was well covered in the progressive black press. In March

1954, Paul Robeson denounced the United States government at an International Workers Order rally, specifically addressing the need to keep Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán, the Guatemalan leader, in power. However, in *Ebony's* pages, subversion is never direct, it is told through the lens of agency and empowerment.

Culturally linked by the Mayan communities in the Yucatan peninsula, Guatemala and Mexico were also politically in tune in the early 1950s. Former Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas praised the land reforms implemented by Guzmán as similar to the strides taken decades earlier in Mexico. Cornell Capa first travelled to Guatemala in 1953, on assignment for *Life* magazine, to document the redistribution of land and the impact of agrarian reforms on the indigenous population. His pictures were included in a photo-essay published in the 12 October 1953 issue of *Life* with the title 'The Red Outpost in Central America—Guatemala's Communists Thrive under Fellow-Traveler Government', accompanied by an equally polemical text.²⁵ The ultra-conservative anti-Communist fear mongering that dominated the contemporary popular press took precedence over the photographer's 'concern'. Capa's pictures became rhetorical devices, captioned to prove the subversive, high-risk, anti-American attitudes dominant in the previously subservient 'banana republic'.²⁶ As Dot Tuer has argued in a recent article, in this photo-essay 'concerned photography had become the handmaiden of propaganda'.²⁷ Conflicts of interest further threatened the position of the United Fruit Company in the country, leading to a CIA-supported coup, which ousted Árbenz in June 1954. While the former Mexican president Cárdenas was an adamant supporter of the coup, the current president Adolfo Tomás Ruiz Cortines was indifferent to the Guatemalan plight. The case was an early instance in the Cold 'theatre' of War in Latin America, illustrative of larger conflicts between McCarthy-era foreign policy and region-wide struggles for economic independence and reform.

Yet one must consider the value, and indeed the power of individual images over the text, and of the body of work as a whole over the editorial structure within which it was subsequently embedded. Capa's photo-reportage can be read alternatively, and hence two coinciding yet not entirely compatible narratives emerge. The photo-essay begins with a profile of Carlos Manuel Pellecer, a union organiser and activist for agrarian reform who was also a prominent political leader for the Árbenz administration. The photographer follows Pellecer's interactions with peasants, plantation workers, and their families in a strikingly impoverished but unspecific rural setting, occasioned by a land distribution ceremony following the implementation in 1952 of Decree 900. This new law required redistribution of sections of unused land larger than 224 acres to the peasant population. The reform remains a historic achievement that positively affected primarily indigenous groups, the largest of the majority land-deprived Guatemalan population. While the text of the *Life* photo-essay unequivocally inscribes the photographs as proof of Pellecer's self-serving Communist agenda, without the associated captions they merely show a charismatic leader at work.



2.3
Cornell Capa, Barefoot
Peasants Drink Cham-
pagne at the Dedication
of a School Built by the
Reformist Government,
Which Was Supported
by the Communists,
1953.

The middle section of the essay addresses the delicate position of the United Fruit Company, recently affected by the very same land reform movement. The article states that large portions of the company's reserve land were expropriated by the Guatemalan government in 1952 and again in 1953: 'Now, though still making money, United Fruit talks about being forced to get out altogether'. In the photographs, modern facilities and housing provided for the workers are juxtaposed against a background of 'thatched native shacks' and squalor, the advancement of enterprise for future mutual benefit temporarily postponed.

The third section of the article pits the infrastructural failures of the 'obsessively nationalistic' Árbenz government against a landscape and a people unable to sustain growth and modernisation on their own. Finally, under the sub-title 'Champagne for the Peons', the essay concludes that against these challenges, coupled with the lack of support from the local business elites, Árbenz's socialist project is destined to fail. Yet the final word is left to a striking photograph captioned 'Peasants Sip Champagne Government Gave for School Dedication' (fig. 2.3). In the foreground, two seated *campesinos*, dressed in their

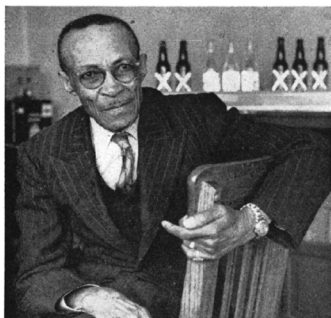
Sunday best, sip champagne from elegant glass cups. Both men have respectfully removed their broad-brimmed straw hats, revealing their groomed hair and clean-shaven faces. Their body language speaks to their modesty rather than humility. Barefoot yet dignified, the men maintain their poise despite the slightly clumsy attention given to proper bourgeois etiquette.

In the following years, Capa travelled repeatedly to Central and South America, where he focused on photographing poverty and the disenfranchisement of the lower classes, often the indigenous peoples, of Guatemala, Peru, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Ecuador.²⁸ Such prohibitive circumstances, he argued in his 1974 book *Margin of Life—Population and Poverty in the Americas*, were both directly caused by and contributed to the political instability in Central America.²⁹ Together with the remaining, albeit scant, documentary record, these photographs indicate a persistent interest throughout Capa's career in describing aspects of class, and a growing concern toward the peasant working class, in highlighting difference and inequality, whether economically or politically motivated. In concerned photography, the photographer turns his lens to the 'margins of life'—the austere black and white aesthetic, as well as the great attention to detail, serves to heighten the acute privation that unites the different social, economic, and political regions scrutinised. The type of direct emotional appeal deployed by Capa and fellow 'concerned' photographers was criticised as sentimental, if not exploitative, by later critics, most prominently Allan Sekula, who bemoaned the political inefficacy of humanist documentary—'the often expressionist liberalism of the find-a-bum school of concerned photography'.³⁰ When compared to that of the 1953 *Life* photo-essay, the tone of *Margin of Life* appears elegiac when not inflammatory, a call to action and raised concern. The book advocates for humanitarian engagement, seeking to raise awareness to living conditions in Honduras, El Salvador, and the whole of Central America, placing responsibility on United States interventionism and its support of authoritarian regimes. Reconsidered when released from the strictures of the edited essay, Capa's 1953 photographs from Guatemala take on a life of their own, beyond their illustrative function, building a discourse that runs parallel to the textual account.

AESTHETIC STRUCTURES AND IDENTITIES: THE PHOTO-ESSAY

After World War II, the photo-essay shifted from its prewar avant-garde format to a stand-in for mass consumption and tourist, celebrity, and automobile culture. However, in Mexico it allowed a slippage between worlds and at times a heretical approach to race and gender roles.³¹ Beginning during the presidency of Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946–52) and continuing into the Cortines administration (1952–58), Mexico City underwent a profound demographic shift that saw increased population density as well as urbanisation, rampant consumption, and continuous new construction. Scholars such as Anne Rubenstein have chronicled this growth, which was accompanied by an increase in periodical publications,

BUSINESSMEN



Neon sign manufacturer George Brown erected \$40,000 factory with 40 employees seven years ago. Now 75, he has rented out plant. He still imports and sells machinery from England.



Hotel owner William Huey "Butch" Lewis is perhaps best known U.S-born Negro in Mexico, once owned largest restaurant in Mexico City handling 600 diners. He now runs hotel and cafe at Cuernavaca.



Radio repairman Lee Weaver runs shop in Mexico City. The 38-year-old ex-musician was Western Electric radar inspector during war, came to Mexico two years ago with \$1,000 to open shop.

PENSIONERS

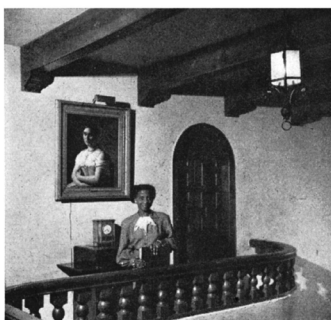


Former college teachers Dudley and Gertrude Woodard spend six months a year in Mexico City studying Mexican literature. He retired as Howard U. math department head in 1947, she as Minor Teachers College dean. They motored down in new Plymouth, have collected more than 100 books on Mexican literature.



One-time American Club headwaiter Jose Joyner first came to Mexico 47 years ago as Pullman porter, later got waiter's job at Mexico City club composed of Americans. He worked at club 34 years, retired this Fall at age of 70. His wife is Mexican, has had seven children. Joyner is a deacon at Mexico City Baptist Church.

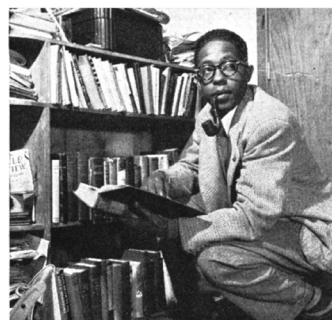
PROFESSIONALS



Housekeeper Gladys Wells runs luxurious home of millionaire racetrack boss Bruno Pagliai. Ex-Hall Johnson choir singer has charge of six Mexican servants, gets two-month vacation each year.



Veterinarian Paul Britten and his librarian wife, Bettye, came to Mexico year ago to work with Institute of Tropical Diseases. Formerly on A-bomb project, Britten returned to U. S. recently.



Steel import company manager George Maddox came from Detroit nine years ago, laid out machinery in new dry cleaning plant opened in Mexico recently. Wayne U. graduate, 35, has become naturalized Mexican.

2.4

Page from 'Mexico: U.S. Negro Migrants Find a Racial Oasis South of Dixie', *Ebony* (October 1948), p. 14.

14

the advent of telenovelas, the invention of a rich homegrown cinema, as well as the proliferation of cultural imports from the United States.³² This period after the war is often analysed as a moment when the ideals of the Mexican Revolution are lost to the consumer culture of the West.³³ Yet, left-leaning American artists still flocked to Mexico City and, as explained above, many African Americans found a freedom of movement and expression in Mexico that was unrealised in even the more liberal Northeast states.

In an *Ebony* 1948 photo-essay, 'Mexico: U.S. Negro Migrants Find a Racial Oasis South of Dixie' (fig. 2.4), staff photographers picture African American businessmen, pensioners, professionals, students, and entertainers as brightly smiling and enjoying the 'fresh air of freedom' offered by Mexico.³⁴ The two-page spread shows blacks posed outside of the studio, informally with minimal contextual background information. The high-contrast images are accompanied by text that focuses on individual accomplishment.

Though the photo-essay portrays a wide range of ages and socioeconomic levels with which readers can identify such as the example of a World War II veteran who went to Mexico on the GI Bill in order to complete medical coursework. Black servicemen made up the majority of Mexican émigrés. By beginning with a radio repairman, a manufacturer, and a hotel owner and ending with a picture of a future doctor, the article implies that the future for an African American middle class rests with individuals who are willing to move away from the United States. While the article dedicates space to retirees and vacationers heading south, its main thrust is to locate a place for cultural mobility for African Americans in the postwar period. This was akin to *Ebony* magazine's editorial goals of 'taking pride in [Negro] men of means' rather than picturing 'slum dwellers, criminals, sharecroppers, and zoot suiters';³⁵ this article was emblematic of a nationwide push for upward mobility in postwar United States. Though the magazine's editorial voice was clearly outside of the progressive left-wing politics of older publications like *The Crisis*, it spoke to a certain zeitgeist of the period that spurred hundreds of blacks to move to Mexico City and generated a common expectation of what life would be like once there.

Mexico as a synecdoche for 'an African American oasis' appeared in both popular and more intellectual publications. For example, the article 'Paradise Down South' appeared in *The Crisis* in 1950.³⁶ Like the *Ebony* article, this story also featured an ex-serviceman, in this case, the Navy officer William Byers, who registered at the Escuela de Bellas Artes on the GI Bill.³⁷ The monthly subsidy made him a 'wealthy man' in San Miguel. The only point of departure between the two articles is that *The Crisis* article states Byers was the only black man in San Miguel while the *Ebony* author mentioned that over three hundred African Americans sought refuge in Mexico. Furthermore, these refugees aspired to a more egalitarian society, which became tethered to the aspirations of twelve million inhabitants of Mexico with African ancestry, who used their socioeconomic means to escape the discrimination faced by locals.

Paralleling the tension evoked in the *Ebony* title, here again, the utopian vision of a paradisiacal environment is presented in dichotomy with the actual environment of the racially violent Southern states. For if we cleave the title 'Paradise/Down South' in half, paradise is presented in opposition to down south. Analogously in 'Mexico: U.S. Negro Migrants Find a Racial Oasis South of Dixie', racial oasis is separated from south of Dixie. Mexico was often held up as an antidote to the poisonous conditions for blacks in the Jim Crow South. It is fitting, then, that the article directly following the latter *Ebony* article addresses violence in the South. In the case of the former 'Paradise Down South', which had been published in *The Crisis* has two quotes follow the article, the first by Lillian Smith and the second by José Martí:

The South has been kept 'solid' a long time by this one-party system which depends for its staying power on the highly emotional beliefs in states' rights and segregation.

There is no race hatred because there are no races. Weak thinkers lamp-thinkers, weave and produce races in the library, which the just, cordial and observing traveller seeks in vain to find in the justice of nature where the problem of the universal identity of man has been solved in turbulent appetite and vi[c]torious love.

Both quotes are from ardent opponents of state-sponsored racism. The first was written by Lillian Smith in 1949 about segregation in the American South and its psychological impact on both whites and blacks.³⁸ The second, by the Cuban poet and revolutionary José Martí, was published in 'Nuestra America', an essay that promoted better relations between Latin American countries as opposed to United States dominance in the Americas.³⁹ Martí believed that these interrelations rested on acknowledging the richness of a polyvalent ethnicity that combined Europeans, blacks, and indigenous people. Because these quotes follow the *Crisis* article, they present Mexico as just such an example of a mixed culture. It is an oasis, a paradise of mixture, and thus a release from the fear of racial violence. The *Crisis* article noted that Byers searched all over San Miguel, but '[t]here was not a hint of discrimination anywhere. He knew he must be in paradise'.⁴⁰ Byers's first-hand account, along with the *Ebony* and *Color* photographs and testimonials, acted like *local legends* for foreigners seeking an entryway into Mexico City communities.⁴¹

Ebony and *Life* in many ways upheld American foreign policy even if it came at the price of compromising their purported postwar ideals. In the early half of the century, photo-collage and the photo-essay had avant-garde associations with collage and montage, simultaneity, and punning in the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé or in other instances with the progressive politics of John Heartfield. However by the 1950s, this became streamlined with an emphasis on high-contrast close-up photographs of individuals, informal poses, and captions that reinforced straightforward interpretations. It is easy to pigeonhole and dismiss these magazine layouts as the 'handmaiden' of United States propaganda, and yet we argue that there is more nuance here than such a reading suggests.

The black and indigenous figures in these spreads have carved out dignity and agency. Whether by finding sympathetic photographers like Capa in 'Peasants Sip Champagne Government Gave for School Dedication' or minority practitioners like Davis, the 'others' in these photographs maintain their pride and sense of accomplishment. In this way, photographers and subjects, alike, actively contributed to the formulation of an alternative place for otherness in mainstream American culture.

AESTHETIC STRUCTURES AND IDENTITIES: *THE FAMILY OF MAN*

Steichen may have been unaware of the political situation in Guatemala at the time *The Family of Man* began touring with the USIA. Almost a decade later, writing a memoir from his farmhouse in rural Connecticut, he contemplated fantastic accounts of indigenous people on a mythic march from exotic tropical landscapes to the proverbial white cube:

A notable experience was reported from Guatemala. On the final day of the exhibition, a Sunday, several thousand Indians from the hills of Guatemala came on foot or muleback to see it. An American visitor said it was like a religious experience to see these barefoot country people who could not read or write walk silently through the exhibition gravely studying each picture with rapt attention.⁴²

In fact, as several historians have remarked, after the closing of the exhibition in New York, Steichen's role in the planning of the subsequent traveling versions of the show was minimal.⁴³ While universal in scope, the exhibition was nonetheless planned with an American audience in mind. This projection was preserved to a great extent even in the slightly modified versions traveling abroad. Steichen had never visited Latin America, with the exception of Mexico, where in January and February 1938, he travelled on a cruise with his wife, Dana. It was one of the rare occasions when the photographer went on vacation, having recently withdrawn from his position as chief photographer for Condé Nast Publications.⁴⁴ A handful of photographs from the trip survive in the archives, with the only souvenir portrait of the couple taken by a commercial photographer in Chichén Itzá, Yucatan. In another instance, Dana playfully captured Steichen's overshadowed figure in an intimate, close crop, setting up his camera and tripod at the mouth of a petrified reptilian head, amongst the Mayan ruins.

Primarily a studio photographer and portraitist, working with cumbersome large-format cameras and equipment, Steichen deliberately travelled light, with a small 35mm camera loaded with colour Kodachrome film. Colour was a rather unusual choice for a professional at the time, although Steichen had been experimenting with the medium long-term. One of the surviving photographs from the trip shows a market scene purportedly in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán—although it is unclear whether Steichen travelled that far in the country.⁴⁵ Instead of monumental views of the ruins at Chichén Itzá or of the turquoise Caribbean Sea, Steichen zoomed in on the people.⁴⁶

There, everything was dazzling, exciting and new, and the Mexican sunlight was a real challenge to color film . . . Most intriguing of all was Yucatan with its fabulous ruins and its record of the Mayan Indian civilization. The faces of the charming, and gentle twentieth century Mayans were duplicates of the frescoes of their ancestors. . . . [A]s I look back at my experience in Yucatan, I still feel curiosity and nostalgia. It is one place in which I have spent a little time that has left me with a strong desire to return.⁴⁷

One sees in this group of pictures a consistent interest in what appeared to be 'authentically' Mexican, indigenous culture. This type of exoticising fantasy would later play a key part in staging *The Family of Man*, bringing together the diverse indigenous peoples of

Central and South America, under the one ahistorical, half-mythological category of the 'Indian' ancestor. The image is perhaps best embodied by Eugene V. Harris's photograph *Peruvian Flute* or *Peruvian Boy with Flute* (1954), which became the signature image for the exhibition, featured throughout its different sections, and reproduced on the cover of the catalogue, on posters, and other promotional materials.⁴⁸

In a 1967 article called 'The Photographic Image of Underdevelopment' for the Havana-based journal *Punto de Vista* (Point of View), Edmundo Desnôes would write about this image of:

the Peruvian Indian who smiles while playing his flute. It is symbolic—a romantic, ingenuous symbol of the unity of all peoples. It fails to consider that the Latin American Indian lives in abject poverty, simultaneously exploited and rejected and abandoned by the wealth of an industrial era. Children such as this Peruvian Indian rarely live to adulthood. Steichen thus distorts this image and wrenches it out of social reality.⁴⁹

The curator's vision, Desnôes argues, while persuasively and romantically asserted through the selection of photographs and the superimposed narrative structures, cannot suspend the experience of acute inequality: 'Love in the jungle and in ignorance does not mean the same as in civilization amid comfortable surroundings'.⁵⁰ Most importantly, Desnôes chooses to place the exhibition within the broader category of 'Art', locating the individual photographs exclusively within the realm of the aesthetic—a space where the viewer is prompted, emotionally and cognitively, to experience fantasy as reality and reality as fantasy. Even the work of Manuel Alvarez Bravo, the only Latin American photographer included in the show, becomes 'cold', surrounded by clichés of the exoticism of the broader non-Western world rendered as one.⁵¹ It was precisely the opposition to this apolitical and ahistorical stance, as well as the desire to overcome such stereotypical representations of Latin America that brought together the photographers, artists, and cultural actors who participated in the 1978 First Colloquium of Latin American Photographers in Mexico City—an important event that established, almost unanimously, the centrality of the social in the production of photographic work in the region and the existence of a transnational, indeed Latin American, cultural and aesthetic identity.

In 1958, three years into the exhibition's traveling record, Steichen would write, 'We have in photography a medium which communicates not only to us English-speaking peoples, but communicates equally to everybody throughout the world. It is the only universal language we have, the only one requiring no translation'.⁵² The 'universal language' argument had already been brought in to bolster the apolitical character of the exhibition during its planning stages in 1954, and was reaffirmed by Steichen during the years of the USIA tour. The assertion was that the subject of the photographs was unambiguous, as was their placement within purportedly self-evident narrative structures, constructing

a panorama of human experience and of the world's peoples democratically allied. The brief captions assigned only included the name of the photographer, the country where the picture was taken, and the governmental or commercial agency that had commissioned the work. Transgressing this prescribed logic however, unscripted, parallel narratives of a yet inchoate First and Third World dynamic emerged throughout the show. For instance, Africa and Latin America were brought closer conceptually, if not dialogically, through primitivist stereotypes originating in the type of colonial anthropological photographic practices that had produced various forms of scientific and popular imagery during the previous century. Both regions were depicted as largely traditional pre-industrial cultures, modernised only in part.

Race became a universal category instead of a category of difference, flexed around the exoticism of all non-Western cultures, surveying the subaltern subject in areas of direct control, although with compassion and sympathy—however condescending that attitude may have been perceived to be. Several instances from the USIA tour reveal the extent to which unstated political implications were in fact very much present. Despite the resounding success demonstrated by the massive attendance numbers paraded by the USIA, in Johannesburg, to take a documented example, only whites were allowed to visit the show. During the summer of 1959, while another version of the exhibition was on view in Moscow's Sokolniki Park as part of the American National Exhibition, a Nigerian student, Theophilus Uokonkwo, violently defaced four of the photographic panels, slashing through a sight he described in the Washington, DC-based magazine *Afro-American* as 'insulting, undignified and tendentious': 'The collection portrayed white Americans and other Europeans in dignified cultural states—wealthy, healthy and wise, and American and West Indian Negroes, Africans and Asiatics as comparatively social inferiors—sick, raggedy, destitute, and physically maladjusted. African men and women were portrayed either half clothed or naked'.⁵³ Even for the primary audiences of the exhibit, based in the United States, while some racial stereotypes were (arguably) contested, others were reinforced. Photographs by Roy DeCarava and Gordon Parks showed affirmative images of African Americans: families, couples, workers, and children inhabiting the same domestic spaces and participating in the same activities as their fellow white citizens. At the same time, their coexistence is never captured inside the picture frame.

Records attesting to the show's reception in Guatemala and in Mexico are scant. In Guatemala it was on view at the Palacio de Protocolo in Guatemala City between 25 August and 18 September 1955, coinciding with the first meeting of the Organisation of Central American States which was held in Antigua.⁵⁴ In direct contrast to the idyllic life shown in *The Family of Man*, the political situation in Guatemala was far from relaxed. It had barely been a year since the United States-supported coup had forced president Jacobo Árbenz to resign, sending him into exile in Europe. While newspapers ran smear campaigns against him, the new president, Carlos Castillo Armas, was securing power. Considered the first instance of direct conflict in the Cold War, the 1954 Guatemalan

coup was also the first of a series of violent interventions that were to characterise United States–Latin American relations throughout the next four decades.

In Mexico City the exhibition was open between 21 October and 20 November 1955. A cable sent out to the State Department by a locally dispatched public affairs officer expressed dissatisfaction with the show, despite its popularity, or precisely therefore, for lacking a clear political message:

Surrounding the exhibit the United States Government promotes the idea of the brotherhood of men. On the level of idea alone, there is nothing in the exhibit that could not be promulgated equally by libertarian and anti-libertarian doctrines. . . . That is to say, the idea is one which the Communists might also have sought to propagate otherwise.⁵⁵

Especially when compared to the fantastical message passed on to Steichen through the Guatemalan dispatch, this was a strikingly pragmatic bureaucratic response. Between 1938 and 1955 the photographer's romantic perspective on Latin America remained largely untouched, a story of survival and universal hope—whereby in an increasingly interconnected visual world, our distinctive cultural identities survive, and we witness a return of the repressed, indigenous communities reclaiming their land. The actuality of Cold War US–Latin American relations however greatly contradicted this stance.

During the 1980s, cultural critics such as Allan Sekula and Christopher Phillips, in following Roland Barthes, claimed that the universalist rhetoric employed by Steichen and taken up by the USIA was in fact symptomatic of the United States' imperialist, economically monopolising foreign policy, ideologically disguised as benevolent, humanist, and democratic.⁵⁶ Recent publications have reframed these postmodern critiques. For example, Jorge Ribalta argued that aside from its participation in a larger system of cultural diplomacy through the USIA, *The Family of Man* had lost its political momentum before it even came into being, due to the absolute separation between avant-garde aesthetics and politics in the aftermath of World War II.⁵⁷ Shifting the discussion to the field of human rights discourses and international programs during the 1950s, Ariella Azoulay proposed an analysis of the photographs in the exhibition 'as prescriptive statements claiming universal rights', reading it as 'an archive containing the visual proxy of the United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights'.⁵⁸ Indeed, following Azoulay's lead, we may begin to rethink the exhibition as a multi-layered artefact that belongs largely to its time, yet which has achieved levels of significance beyond the influence of its original author and producers. Perhaps inadvertently, Steichen created an ethnographic object-installation, from within the institutional framework of the Museum of Modern Art, a prominent space of hegemonic culture and identity formation. Through the lens of Cornell Capa's work—his photographic output as well as his curatorial, ideological 'concerned photography' project—we may begin to reconsider this monumental installation as an expression of

a similar aesthetic of concern, albeit a precarious one. Read accordingly, one might indeed ask, as Capa did, whether *The Family of Man* mobilises a repetition of the postwar 'never again' in utopian discourse—the only space where it remained undefeated at the break of the Cold War.

CONCLUSION

I went to Latin America as a concerned photographer, hoping that my work in that underreported area would prove to be a catalyst for positive change. . . . I was grieved by what I saw and became a partisan in that longest and most critical war of all, the war against poverty, ignorance, and oppression. I have never understood why the United States government, industry, and press continue to treat Latin America so badly.⁵⁹

Capa went to Latin America as a concerned photographer. His goal there was to cover the region's turmoil, which he acknowledged stemmed from United States intervention. *Ebony* photographers who documented African Americans moving to Mexico also became partisans through their depictions of African Americans living a life that was not circumscribed by racial prejudice. These documentary photographers were not 'avant-garde', but rather worked for the mainstream press, a role that allowed them to present their images to a much wider audience. Perhaps by presenting these micro-photographic histories in parallel in the postwar moment, we can forge a mutual non-segregated history. Also of primary concern is tethering the aspirations of *Life* with the story of *Ebony*, a publication of equal importance, yet less known to scholars. In both histories, utopian ideals of cohabitation, transnationalism, and interracial interaction emerge. André Malraux suggests photography could show you a museum without walls, where images could be contained in the gallery but also in the serial that is disseminated around the globe. Through our case studies, we have sought to construct a dialogue that would introduce alternating authorship, improvisation, and a multivalent approach to visual history analysis—one that buttresses the case for collaborative histories as woven from multiple perspectives, in order to reconstruct and analyse a specific historical moment.

All references in *Courtauld Books Online* are hyperlinked. To navigate to a footnote, click on the reference number in the body of the text. To return back to the main text, click on the number at the beginning of the footnote.

1. During the war years, *Life* magazine pictured the narrative arc of the war. Margaret Bourke-White's coverage of the siege in Moscow, Patton's campaigns and the liberation of Buchenwald, are examples of how the depravities of the war came to define it in public consciousness.
2. The founding of the United Nations, an organization dedicated to the promotion and safeguarding of peace and international cooperation, and their adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 reinforced the widespread concern with how stable governments (Western-backed) would ensure equality, freedom, and peaceful, productive human interaction. Furthermore, the United States emerged as a world superpower, exerting its dominance through both diplomacy and military force; this development coincided with the photographic drive on both sides of the Atlantic to interrogate social conditions in the developing world. The co-existence of less industrial nations, and their industrialized counterparts, was theorized at this crucial moment between World War II and the 'proper' start of the Cold War, as one of three worlds on one planet. The Third World came into being with the publication in 1952 of French anthropologist Alfred Sauvy's article 'Trois mondes, une planète' (Three Worlds, One Planet), in which he used this common denominator to demarcate those countries, many of which were former colonies, that were non-aligned, either with the West or the Soviet Bloc. Until the 1980s, when the hegemony imposed by the label began to be disputed, the Third World remained a core concept for defining relations between and within the hemispheres.
3. Cornell Capa, the brother of Robert Capa, was the associate director and, later, president of Magnum Photos (1956–60), as well as the founder of the International Fund for Concerned Photography (1966) and the International Center of Photography in New York (1974).
4. Cornell Capa (ed.), *The Concerned Photographer* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1968).
5. Recent exhibitions of photography have explored the role of photographs as itinerant objects in transnational contexts; see Eduardo Cadava and Gabriela Nouzeilles (eds.), *The Itinerant Languages of Photography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Art Museum, 2013), p. 36.
6. Carl Lummholtz, *Unknown Mexico: A Record of Five Years' Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madre; in the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco; and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902).
7. Lummholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, p. 168.
8. James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 245.
9. Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, p. 245.
10. Michel Leiris, *L'âge d'homme* (Paris: Gallimard) Trans. Richard Howard as *Manhood* (Berkeley: North Press, 1985), p. 15.
11. Siegfried Giedeon, *Mechanization Takes Command* (New York: Norton, 1969), p. v.
12. Eric Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition: The Family of Man and 1950s America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).
13. Edward Steichen, "Photography: Witness and Recorder of Humanity", *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 41 (3): p. 161. The enlarged color transparency showed hydrogen bomb Mike (Operation Ivy) detonated in the Enewetak Atoll on 1 November 1952. Previously censored from the public, photographs and a film documenting the explosion were released only in 1954, published in the 19 April issue of *Life*. This sequence of images was titled 'Color Photographs Add Vivid Reality to Nation's Concept of H-Bomb'.
14. The USIA produced four versions of the exhibition, which from 1955 to 1962 traveled to thirty-eight countries (ninety-one shows), and were seen by an estimated nine million visitors. See Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition*, p. 95. A restored version is now installed in Luxembourg, and was included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2003.
15. The extent to which the exhibition participated in Cold War politics and cultural diplomacy has been expanded upon at length in seminal texts by Allan Sekula and Christopher Phillips. Eric Sandeen has shown direct ties between the USIA, the Museum of Modern Art and Nelson Rockefeller, who was a museum trustee and a major supporter of the show, also active in United States—Latin American relations from after WWII and through to the Nixon presidency. See, for instance, Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition*, 96.
16. For more detailed examination of Alston's cartoons, see Harry Amana, 'The Art of Propaganda: Charles Alston's World War II Editorial Cartoons for the Office of War Information and the Black Press', *American Journalism* 21 (2004): pp. 79–111.
17. Sumptuary laws limiting displays of wealth were common in colonial Mexico (New Spain). These limits were enforced based on a racial hierarchy from Spanish peninsulares on the top to indigenous and blacks on the bottom. See Edward Sullivan, *The Language of Objects in the Art of the Americas* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 58.
18. José Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race/La Raza Cósmica*, (trans.) Didier T. Jaén (1925; Los Angeles: California State University, Los Angeles, 1979). See also Esther Gabara, 'Recycled Photographs: Moving Still Images of Mexico City, 1950–2000', in Marcy E. Schwartz and Mary Beth

Tierney-Tello (eds.), *Photography and Writing in Latin America: Double Exposures* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), pp. 148–49.

19. A. Villarreal, 'Stratification by Skin Color in Contemporary Mexico', *American Sociological Review* 75:5 (2010): pp. 652–78.

20. Even following the end of slavery, this held true. Now African Americans are the only cultural minority in the United States to self-identify as black regardless of their dominant racial heritage.

21. See 'King Cole's Honeymoon Diary', *Ebony*, August 1948, pp. 24–28, and Adam Green, *Selling the Race: Culture, Community, and Black Chicago, 1940–1955* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 153.

22. Katherine Emma Manthorne, *Tropical Renaissance* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), pp. 134–35.

23. Langston Hughes, *Autobiography: The Big Sea*, (ed.) Joseph McLaren (St. Louis: University of Missouri Press, 2002), p. 55.

24. 'A Student's Journey Into the Past', *Ebony*, November 1959, p. 37.

25. 'The Red Outpost in Central America - Guatemala's Communists Thrive Under Fellow-Traveler Government', *Life* (October 12, 1953), pp. 169–77. The issue can be found here <https://books.google.com/books/about/LIFE.html?id=NoEAAAAMBAJ>, accessed 25 May 2017.

26. An important note here concerns the Tenth Inter-American Conference in Caracas in March 1954, where Guatemala was the single American republic (Mexico and Argentina abstained) to vote against the United States' motion to act against Communism and foreign intervention in hemispheric affairs. This was an updated version of the notorious Monroe doctrine which had previously served to justify United States interventions in regional as well as internal affairs in Central and South America.

27. See Dot Tuer, 'Cornell Capa Photographs Guatemala's Revolution', *In the Darkroom*, accessed 6 August 2013, <http://inthedarkroom.org/coldwarcamera/cornell-capa-photographs-guatemalas-revolution>.

28. Following an assignment for *Life* to photograph United States missionary work in Ecuador after five Evangelical Christian missionaries were killed by an isolated Huaorani tribe in 1956, Capa became interested in documenting endangered indigenous populations in the Amazonian basin. 'I felt that it was essential to make a photographic documentation of tribal life, as untouched as possible by modern civilization, before that life was eradicated forever. I also wanted to show the world the tragic disruption of that life as tribal people were transformed into pittance-earning peons, cheated by unscrupulous traders, and seduced by the

call of cities with which they unprepared to deal'. Quoted in Cornell Capa, *Cornell Capa Photographs*, (ed.) Richard Whelan (Boston: Little, Brown, 1992), p. 152. See also Cornell Capa and Matthew Huxley, *Farewell to Eden* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

29. 'We have chosen to emphasize the darker side of the picture because we feel it is both more representative and more deserving of attention. In doing so we risk disappointing many of the people in Honduras and El Salvador who gave us generously of their time and assistance, and we risk incurring the hostility of public officials sensitive about the national image. We regret this, but believe that in the long run we will have done more good than harm; for North Americans must know what Central America looks like after a decade of the Alliance for Progress, and there are also many Central Americans who need to know Scholars, journalists, and photographers must probe, diagnose, and call attention to. We hope we have done this. We hope others will do what they have to do'. Cornell Capa and J. Mayone Stycos, *Margin of Life: Population and Poverty in the Americas* (New York: Grossman, 1974), p. 5.

30. Allan Sekula, 'Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes on the Politics of Representation)', *Massachusetts Review* 19:4 (1978): pp. 859–83.

31. Esther Gabara, *Errant Modernism: The Ethos of Photography in Mexico and Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 146–48.

32. Anne Rubenstein, 'Mass Media and Popular Culture in the Postrevolutionary Era', in William H. Beezley and Michael C. Meyer (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 599–633.

33. Rubenstein, 'Mass Media and Popular Culture in the Postrevolutionary Era', pp. 620–21.

34. 'Mexico: U.S. Negro Migrants Find a Racial Oasis South of Dixie', *Ebony*, October 1948, p. 15.

35. 'Negroes Can Take Pride in Their Rich', *Ebony*, October 1948, p. 56. That same year Nat King Cole honeymooned in Mexico.

36. Minor Neal, 'Paradise Down South', *The Crisis*, April 1950, p. 231.

37. Ibid. There, he studies with David Siqueiros who is named as a 'famous Mexican muralist'.

38. Lillian Smith, *Killers of the Dream* (reprint, New York: W. W. Norton, 1994).

39. José Martí, 'Our America', *Revista Ilustrada* 2 (January 10, 1891): 1–6.

40. Neal, 'Paradise Down South', p. 231.

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41. See 'How Negroes Fare in Mexico', *Color*, October 1953, pp. 13–15. This article is in the style of the Ebony piece. The conclusion of the article is that Mexico is place a race-blind society: 'So far as color and race goes, Mexicanos of Negro extraction fare just as well as anybody else'. The idea of city as a local legend is taken from Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117. "[Cities] offer to store up rich silences and wordless stories... local legends (Legenda: what is to be read, but also what can be read) permit exits, ways of going out and coming back in, and thus habitable spaces."
42. Edward Steichen, *A Life in Photography* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), n.p.
43. 'Steichen surrendered control of the photographs and became an interested spectator, occasionally rendezvousing with *The Family of Man* as it toured the world'. Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition*, p. 97.
44. Steichen traveled with the New York and Cuba Mail Steamship Company, aboard the steamer 'Yucatan' from New York to Havana, and Veracruz, Mexico. Brief notes, business cards, postcards and travel paraphernalia from the trip are now preserved at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York—as part of Steichen's personal archives, donated to the museum in the early 2000s.
45. Paul Strand had photographed Pátzcuaro and Michoacán during an extensive trip in 1932–34, as part of larger project to document the transformation of the country following the Revolution. Working in a straight, uninflected documentary manner, he sought to create a 'collective portrait' of modern Mexico, of individuals observed in their lived environment, both natural and built. See James Kripplner, *Paul Strand in Mexico* (New York: Aperture, 2010). Productive parallels are to be drawn between Strand's and Steichen's perspectives on Mexico, despite the scarcity of remaining material.
46. One is reminded here of the historic European and North American popular interest in Mexico's pre-Columbian past. Prominent examples of photographic work include Claude-Joseph Désiré Charnay's mid-nineteenth-century travel albums, and later photo-books by Laura Gilpin (*Temples in Yucatan*, 1948) and Gisele Freund (*Mexique Précolombien*, 1954).
47. Steichen, *A Life in Photography*, section 11.
48. The photograph was taken in Pisac, Peru, in 1954 and had previously been published in the American magazine *Popular Photography*.
49. Desnôes, Edmundo. 'La imagen fotográfica del subdesarrollo' [The Photographic Image of Underdevelopment]. Translated by Julia Lesage. *Jump Cut* 33 (1988), pp. 69–81. Originally published in *Punto de Vista* (1967). Accessed August 25, 2016. <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinesays/JC33folder/photoUndvtDesnoes.html>.
50. Edmundo. 'La imagen fotográfica del subdesarrollo', pp. 69–81.
51. Edmundo. 'La imagen fotográfica del subdesarrollo', pp. 69–81.
52. Steichen, 'Photography', p. 160.
53. Quoted in Sandeen, *The Family of Man*, p. 155. Uokonkwo had pleaded for the removal of the photographs with the Russian and United States exhibition organizers.
54. A Guatemalan diplomatic mission had previously seen the show in July at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. An agreement to travel the exhibit may have been brokered then. For an in-depth analysis of the Guatemala City tour see Eric Sandeen 'The Family of Man in Guatemala.' *Visual Studies* 30, no. 2 (June 2015): pp. 123–130.
55. USIA Mexico, Mexico City, to the United States Department of State, Washington, DC, cable, 3 January 1956, USIA archives; quoted in Sandeen, *The Family of Man*, p. 122.
56. See Roland Barthes, 'The Great Family of Man', in *Mythologies*, (trans.) Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), pp. 100–2; Allan Sekula, 'The Traffic in Photographs', *Art Journal* 41:1 (Spring 1981), pp. 15–25; Christopher Phillips, 'The Judgment Seat of Photography', *October*, no. 22 (Autumn 1982), pp. 27–63.
57. 'The Western avant-garde in the Cold War is a State avant-garde, not related to any particular social movement and produced in a context in which propaganda had lost legitimacy. The postwar period favored discourses that diluted social tensions and antagonisms, such as the discourse of humanism that would dominate the Western scene and its new geopolitical order'. Jorge Ribalta, *Public Photographic Spaces: Exhibitions of Propaganda, from Pressa to The Family of Man, 1928–55* (Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2008), p. 23.
58. Ariella Azoulay, 'The Family of Man: A Universal Declaration of Human Rights', in Thomas Keenan and Tirdad Zolghadr (eds.), *The Human Snapshot* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011), pp. 19–48.
59. Capa, *Cornell Capa Photographs*, p. 168.