



Edward Weston: Mexico



Norton Photography Gallery August 9, 2008 – November 15, 2008

Full of striking compositions, dramatic still lifes and exquisitely beautiful landscapes, Phoenix Art Museum presents an artistic exploration of Mexico seen through the lens of one of the twentieth century's most influential photographers, Edward Weston. *Edward Weston: Mexico* examines a variety of Weston's early and rare photographs revealing his devotion to the ideals of art, his progression toward the modernist style and his passion for love and life.

This stunning collection of 60 photographs displays the local culture and scenery of Mexico in the 1920s – a rich period for the arts known as the Mexican Renaissance. Weston used a large camera to create technically accomplished black-and-white photos rich in detail and markedly abstract. Mexico allowed him to experiment with new subject matter, such as still lifes and landscapes, making this period one of the most pivotal of his career.

A Career Transformed in Mexico

Born in 1886, Edward Weston began his career practicing a popular photographic style called Pictorialism, creating portraits and nudes. The pieces with minimum contrast and soft-focus had a dream like quality. In 1923, an uninspiring and stagnate commercial portrait business prompted Weston to relocate to Mexico with Modotti. While there, he created innovative work exploring a modernist aesthetic characterized by sharp focused portraits, abstractions, and richly textured still lifes. Weston's work was met with praise and recognition in the midst of the vibrant Mexican artistic culture.

Inspired by a Love Affair

Weston spent roughly three-years in Mexico with his lover, Italian-born actress Tina Modotti. The powerful photographs in this collection visually tell the tale of his passion for both Modotti and his new environment. Modotti played a crucial role in Weston's Mexican experience. She had visited the country before their move and together Modotti and Weston set up a commercial portrait studio as an income source. They explored the cultural climate of their new country, making friends with leading political figures, artists, and writers. Modotti also served as a model for Weston; some of this exhibition's most entrancing photographs are of Weston's partner and muse. A small selection of Modotti's own Mexico photographs will be featured in the exhibition as well.

This exhibition, drawn from the collection of the Center for Creative Photography also includes archival materials – letters, journals and personal snapshots - that deeply enriches the story.

"...the ultimate end, the print, is but a duplication of all that I saw and felt through my camera."

Edward Weston

"...a consummate technician with a marvelous eye for formal beauty."

The New York Times

"Weston brought a conscious Modernism to the genre of photography and helped elevate it in the public mind from the status of snapshot to that of art."

The Arizona Republic

"Weston was easily one of the greatest photographers of all time, with his impossibly brilliant still-life images and nudes."

Phoenix New Times

[DOWNLOAD BROCHURE](#)

Left: Edward Weston, *San Pedro y San Pablo*, 1924, Collection Center for Creative Photography, ©1981 Arizona Board of Regents [abstract staircase]. Center: *Three Fish - Gourds*, Edward Weston, 1925. Edward Weston Archive. 81.252.32. Right: *Manuel Hernández Galván, Shooting*, Edward Weston. 1924. From the Judy and Sidney Zuber Collection of Latin American Photography.

Edward Weston: Mexico is organized by the Center for Creative Photography and Phoenix Art Museum and is presented in the Museum's Doris and John Norton Gallery. Major support for this exhibition is provided by Robin and Ric Donnelley, Joanie and Rick Fox, and Alliance Bank of Arizona. Additional support is provided by Steve Woods Printing Company. Promotional support is provided by Latino Future Magazine, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Yelp.com and Scottsdale, Glendale, Mesa, and Phoenix Public Libraries.



[Back to Main Exhibitions page](#)