

Buenas tardes, señoras y señores, estimados amigos de México; bienvenidos!

Guten Abend, Gruezi miteinander, liebe Freunde Mexikos; herzlichst willkommen!

An allererster Stelle möchte ich mich beim Kunstmuseum Bern, bei Direktor Dr. Matthias Frehner und seinem Team, insbesondere bei der Kuratorin der Ausstellung Dr. Valentina Locattelli, für die gute Zusammenarbeit mit der Mexikanischen Botschaft in der Vorbereitung dieser Veranstaltung bedanken. Ein geglücktes Team-Work, das uns grosse Freude und noch dazu auch recht viel Spass bereitet hat. Danke vielmal! Mille grazie!

Muchas gracias también a Duo en Cuerdas por su bella contribución al programa musical de este evento.

And now, if I may, I will continue in English.

Excellencies, colleagues, dear guests and friends of Mexico!

As the Mexican Ambassador to Switzerland it is an honour to participate in the opening of this exhibition "Mexico reflected in its art: Print, Independence and Revolution". Please allow me to give you a bit of historical background.

In 2010, Mexico commemorated two very important anniversaries: the Bicentennial of its quest for Independence and the Centennial of the Mexican Revolution.

Once the cradle of magnificent ancient civilizations – Toltecs, Olmecs, Mayas and Aztecs also known as Mexica – Mexico was conquered by Spain in 1521. After almost 300 years of colonial domination, as the Vice-royalty of New Spain, in 1810 Mexico's quest for freedom began with the famous "Grito de Independencia" under the leadership of national heroes such as Hidalgo, Morelos and Guerrero.

In 1910, after 100 years of internal strife between Republicans and Monarchists, Federalists and Centralists, Liberals and Conservatives, military interventions by foreign powers, the struggle for national sovereignty led by President Benito Juárez, and a 35-year-long dictatorship by General Porfirio Díaz, the Mexican Revolution was launched, the world's first social movement of the 20th century; with well-known names such as Madero, Carranza, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata.

Some of these historical figures are depicted in several of the works of this exhibition.

Both events, Independence and Revolution, had a tremendous impact on Mexican society, on its identity as a nation and also on its culture. With this in mind, the Museo de la Estampa (Museum of Print) commissioned a series of commemorative works by 52 national and international artists based on the principle of "liberty". We are honoured by the presence of one of the participating Mexican artists here this evening, Patricia Córdoba, Bienvenida y gracias por su participación en esta inauguración.

I am happy to tell you that among the selected international artists, there is also an outstanding artist of Swiss origin, Roger von Gunten. With his deep attachment to his adoptive home of Mexico, he is a true symbol of the friendship and understanding between our two nations.

It was precisely as a sign of friendship that the Museo de la Estampa decided to donate copies of this commemorative print collection to prestigious museums around the world, among them – to our great satisfaction – the Kunstmuseum in Bern.

Printed graphics have had a long tradition in Mexico which was further enhanced by the famous Taller de la Gráfica Popular. The Museo de la Estampa is one of the leading institutions in this field and home to some of the best examples of printing art in Mexico, including the work of José Guadalupe Posada, best-known as the creator of the “Catrina”, the skeleton pictured as an elegant lady, that – by the way – served as inspiration for the poster and invitation to this event.

Posada was not only an outstanding artist but also a committed social critic and an important precursor of the Mexican Revolution. He passed away in 1913 and it is a happy coincidence that our exhibition takes place on the 100th anniversary of his death. What better way to pay tribute to his memory!

Ladies and gentlemen:

I am convinced that culture in all its manifestations is one of the most effective instruments for fostering friendship and good-will among nations.

We Mexicans are extremely proud of our cultural heritage dating back thousands of years combining our indigenous roots together with our colonial legacy and contemporary creativity. Cultural promotion is one of the highest priorities of Mexican foreign policy. Therefore, during my tenure as Ambassador I will strive to exert my country’s “soft power” – in a friendly and peaceful way, of course - presenting a sample of Mexican culture, be it art, literature, music, film, photography, architecture, cuisine or folklore and popular traditions.

With a view to the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic relations in 2015, I look forward – with your support - to contributing to our common endeavour of bringing our two countries and societies closer together through the wonderful means of culture.

Dear guests:

I hope that you will enjoy the rest of the program this evening including a brief tour of the exhibition. As a well-earned reward for your support and interest, after the tour we cordially invite you to regain your strength with tasty Mexican delicacies and refreshing drinks that we are pleased to offer you.

Thank you very much for your attention. Danke vielmal! Muchas gracias!