

# FRANCISCO TOLEDO



## The other voice

By Gregorio Luke

In 1520, Albrech Dürer saw a collection of Mexican Pre-Hispanic objects in Brussels, sent to King Charles V of Spain by Hernán Cortez. Dürer's reaction was one of unabashed admiration. He affirmed, "Never have I seen, in the course of my life, art that brought me such happiness." Almost five hundred years later, Francisco Toledo inspired in part by Dürer's imagery, has created a new body of contemporary works that explore similar themes and ideas, establishing a visual dialogue with the artist. This response is not only that of an artist, but of a

culture, because Toledo is the contemporary expression of Pre-Hispanic civilizations.

**He represents that other voice, the voice of ancient Mexico.**

Francisco Toledo was born in the heart of the Zapotec culture in Juchitan, Oaxaca on June 17, 1940. His father was a labor leader who was forced to leave Oaxaca for political reasons. Toledo's infancy was spent between the cities of Ixtepec, Ixtaltepec, Arriaga, and Minatitlán. As frequently happens with migrants, the family reaffirmed its



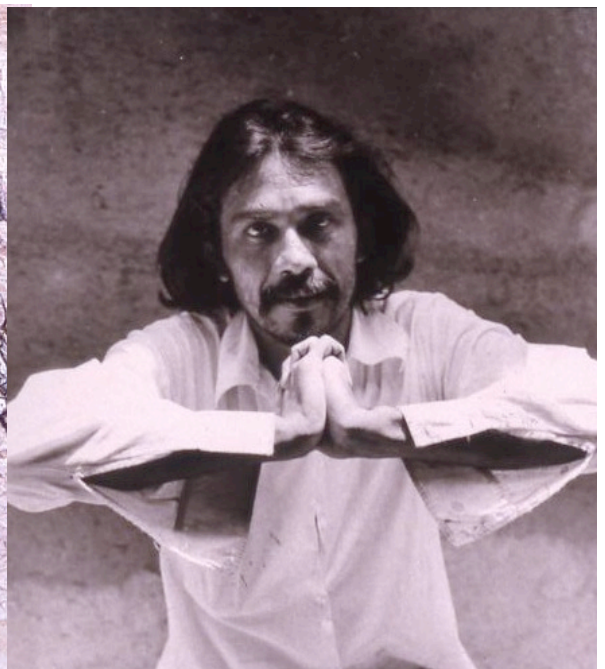
# Francisco Toledo

## La Otra Voz

cultural identity in exile. Toledo grew up immersed in the Zapotec language, recreating the legends and myths of that culture. Many of these elements would subsequently appear in his work.

Toledo began painting as a child and was first encouraged by his father, who chose not to paint over the wall that served as Toledo's first canvas. Toledo then attended high school in Oaxaca and continued in Mexico City, where he studied lithography.

Toledo's art has an intense eroticism, which should not surprise us, as desire is a common element between animals, humans, and insects. Desire is the strongest force opposing death. Desire engenders life, and exists before it. Toledo's art is a vibrant affirmation of desire and therefore of life. He invites us to see the world anew and to rejoice in the wonder of being alive.





## Francisco Toledo La Otra Voz

In 1520, Albrech Dürer saw a collection of Mexican Pre-Hispanic objects in Brussels, sent to King Charles V of Spain by Hernán Cortez. Dürer's reaction was one of unabashed admiration. He affirmed, "Never have I seen, in the course of my life, art that brought me such happiness." Almost five hundred years later, Francisco Toledo inspired in part by Dürer's imagery, has created a new body of contemporary works that explore similar themes and ideas, establishing a visual dialogue with the artist. This response is not only that of an artist, but of a culture, because Toledo is the contemporary expression of Pre-Hispanic civilizations. He represents that other voice, the voice of ancient Mexico.

Francisco Toledo was born in the heart of the Zapotec culture in Juchitan, Oaxaca on June 17, 1940. His father was a labor leader who was forced to leave Oaxaca for political reasons. Toledo's infancy was spent between the cities of Ixtepec, Ixtaltepec, Arriaga, and Minatitlán. As frequently happens with migrants, the family reaffirmed its cultural identity in exile. Toledo grew up immersed in the Zapotec language, recreating the legends and myths of that culture. Many of these elements would subsequently appear in his work.

Toledo began painting as a child and was first encouraged by his father, who chose not to paint over the wall that served as Toledo's first canvas. Toledo then attended high school in Oaxaca and continued in Mexico City, where he studied lithography.

Toledo's art has an intense eroticism, which should not surprise us, as desire is a common element between animals, humans, and insects. Desire is the

