

CAMERA IMAGES: DAGUERREOTYPES, AMBROTYPES AND FERROTYPES

The daguerreotype was the first pre-photographic procedure discovered by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, and his partner Louis Daguerre perfected and popularized it, as well as giving it his name. In August 1839, the procedure was shown publicly, and in December of that year the first exhibitions in Mexico were presented in the port city of Veracruz.

Thanks to portraiture, daguerreotypes became popular among Mexicans. Images were kept in beautiful leather or gutta-percha boxes so that they could be admired individually. In the beginning, the daguerreotype was destined for the wealthy; it was an expensive item for the masses.

These first procedures called “camera images”, had a disadvantage: they were unique pieces, since they yielded a single portrait at a time. The different formats that had this disadvantage were the copper plate soaked in silver (daguerreotype), in glass (ambrotype), in an iron plate (ferrotype) and in white glass (opalotype).

PRINTS FOR EVERYONE: THE NEGATIVE AND MULTIPLE REPRODUCTIONS

After 1850, new photographic techniques were invented that opened new possibilities for photography's commercial exploitation. Glass negative formats used a collodion emulsion, a nitrocellulose based solution mixed with ether and alcohol.

These negatives produced very sharp images, shortened exposure times, and they yielded several prints from one image; these were the reasons for the technologies' novelty.

Negatives slowly replaced the pre-photographic techniques such as the daguerreotype and the ambrotype. The new procedure was called to have a very successful future.

Technical advances managed to massify portraiture; photographic studios multiplied, which meant that photography was less expensive and much more accessible to a larger number of people.

LEADING ROLES: PHOTOGRAPHER AND CAMERA

For paying customers who wanted to have their picture taken, the adventure began when they arrived at the photography studio through a long staircase. Since photographers used natural light to light their clients, studios were located in the roof or in the buildings' higher floors.

In 1872, journalist Juan A. Mateos humorously described his experience in his chronicle "The photographers": he wrote about the poses adopted by clients; how little clients looked like their portraits, and the skin tone clients had in their final photographs.

Four photographers captured with their cameras give us an idea of how these spaces looked: Gaspar Sanabria's visiting card, a photographer from Guanajuato, presents us with a photographic joke, since he creates a montage that has him photographing himself as a client.

Another studio interior shows us the dynamics within the space: a model poses while two photographers are busy taking his picture, probably two of the studio's associates.

In Celestino Álvarez's portrait, published in the *Guía general descriptiva de la República Mexicana* (1899), we can see the photographer next to his camera, and up to six other cameras are visible inside his studio.

Finally, long-lived photographer Andrés Martínez's portrait, taken by his son José Martínez Castaño (owner of Fotografía Daguerre studio), at the beginning of the 20th Century. The portrait shows Don Andrés in the final years of his life as a photographer, a modest man with enormous experience, proud of his profession.

THE CARTE-DE-VISITE AND THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT

The use of negatives, along with printing in albumen paper (emulsified with egg whites), dominated the photographic market for more than 30 years.

Frenchman André Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri won the patent for the *carte-de-visite* format in 1854. They were little photographs, 6 by 10 centimeters, created with a camera of , 8 or 12 lenses, which yielded one negative with several portraits. The positive image was printed on albumen paper. Portraits were then glued to a cardboard the same size as the visiting card, hence its name in French. In this display there are four small portraits of lady, taken in four different poses in one same negative.

The client could ask for a copy of his portrait, six or a twelve of them. These were handed out in cardboard decorated cases. This display shows the cases of Cruces y Cía, Valletto y Cía, Maya u Sciandra and Lorenzo Becerril studios.

Photography's mass popularity was complete, its format and characteristics made it an easily produced item, easily carried and sent, even by mail. This helped with its popularity and demand.

Clara Jiménez's six portraits, taken between 1867 and 1871, and Joaquín Gaxiola's eight, taken between 1887 and 1899, are evidence of the frenzy caused by the *carte-de-visite* among Mexico's middle and high classes. These people did not want to be represented by just one photographer's lens or point of view; they had their portrait taken by many of them.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE SECOND EMPIRE: THE MARKET'S CONSOLIDATION

In 1863, before the arrival of emperors Carlota and Maximilian of Habsburg, their portraits were sold among their future subjects so they were familiar with their likeness. The commercial success was so much that it became the final push the *carte-de-visite* format needed.

Maximilian and Carlota's portraits were taken in Trieste, in Malovich's studio, prior to their arrival in Mexico, and they were sold by the thousands and in several formats in this country. In this section these portraits are shown in large format.

The Second Empire had a decisive impact in the popularity of such a format in three distinct moments of particular political importance: the first was before their arrival in Mexico, when their portraits circulated as imperialist propaganda; the second moment was during their empire, and the third was at the moment they fell, with the dramatic epilogue in Querétaro, when diverse photographers and editors sold a rich array of symbolic images that referred to the fall of the empire and the execution by firing squad of Mejía, Miramón and Maximilian.

This section of the exhibition presents other groups of photographs: imperial military men and politicians or conservative leaning characters who were associated with the imperial adventure; another group of photograph shows the series sold by Agustín Peraire with the Second Empire as subject, and lastly, another group of montages that alluded to the Maximilian's tragic demise and the episode at the Cerro de las Campanas in Querétaro.

The commercial success these photographs had is testament to the power of the public image. Imperial portraits encouraged among the people the desire for the rulers' image, but also the desire to be photographed, and to collect other people's images, an unseen phenomenon up to that moment.

THE PHOTO ALBUM, THE FAMILY “BIBLE”

After 1860 when the photographs in *carte-de-visite* format became popular, it became ever more common to have your picture taken, to exchange pictures among friends and family, or even to collect celebrities' photographs. Demand for photographs was so high it created the need for a new product: the photo album, which contained families' visual chronicles and their relationship with their social surroundings, for their collection and enjoyment.

The photo album became an object of display in the home; it was placed in the living room's table, and it showed the pictures and images of the family's circle of friends and relations. In it, the parent's wedding picture, along with their children baby pictures, their first communion, the daughter's marriage or the priest or military son were kept; also, it had to include cousins, uncles, aunts, and grandparents' portraits, as well as close family friends. To put it in modern terms, the family photo album stored the visual social network of 19th Century Mexicans.

The albums' covers and bindings were made of very different materials, wood, Bakelite, nacre, conch, fabric or leather. They were decorated with beautiful chromolithograph stamps, monograms and seals in the covers, with metal trimming or imitation jewelry. In the 19th Century, France and Germany were most famous for their album creations in a variety of materials and styles.

ANTONIO ESCANDÓN, LORENZO DE LA HIDALGA, TOMÁS LEÓN,
JOSÉ MARÍA IGLESIAS ALBUMS.

These four albums belonged to four famous people in different spheres of 19th Century Mexico: businessman Antonio Escandón; famous Spanish architect Lorenzo de la Hidalga; Mexican pianist and composer Tomás León, and Mexican liberal politician José María Iglesias.

GALLERIES FOR EVERYONE

From the beginning of photography, portraiture was a crowd favorite. With the arrival of simpler and cheaper techniques, the fashion of having your portrait taken grew.

Photographers and editors understood that the *carte-de-visite* had a captive market. Portraits of royalty, politicians, actors, celebrities and even popular characters of Mexican society were sold in photographic studios in Mexico City.

Photography was a product and it was thus commercialized; the great offer of portraits responded to society's need to get to know the great characters; until then only the press was able to politicians or celebrities' physiognomy. For example, Cruces and Campa studio commercialized a large number of leaders, politicians, church authorities, doctors and soldiers, as well as actors, musicians and singers' portraits.

In the five groups we can see some of the series sold, among them Mexican leaders, national characters, and distinguished Mexican doctors, edited by Cruces and Campa studio. Other series were available as well, such as famous liberals, effigies of members of royal families, international celebrities, or you could collect portraits of North American soldiers.

BACKDROPS AND DECORATIONS: A REPERTOIRE OF SCENERIES

In the 19th Century, photography studios had a great variety of backdrops, or decorated curtains designed to simulate a scene or an ambient. The difficulty in transporting photographic equipment to shot in exteriors made the studio portrait dominate during this period and every kind of space was recreated.

Decorated curtains had two main functions: they created a depth effect in the scene and they reproduced in fantasy a particular environment. The backdrops recreated internal and external spaces: the first included rooms in a home, salons, hallways, cabinets, dining rooms or libraries, but also greenhouses, chapels, churches, public buildings and commercial establishments; the backdrops which recreated exteriors included open spaces like atriums, patios, terraces, bridges, gardens, fields, woods, castles, diverse landscapes, even beaches, marine scenes and nocturnal vistas.

FURNITURE AND DECORATION FOR PORTRAITS

Every portrait done inside a studio required a particular solution; a good photograph was the sum of its elements: the backdrop, the objects, the furniture, de the precise composition, the camera placement, correct lighting and the model's pose.

Around 1860, portrait artist began incorporating a large variety of objects made out of cardboard or wood: columns, trees, rocks, rustic fences and artificial benches mixed with other real furniture. Some of these pieces were props that served a decorative function, and they were created with lightweight materials that allowed for easy movement inside the studio.

The photography studios must have an important amount of resources that allowed them to set the stage ideally. If the backdrop managed to situate the client in a specific environment, it was enhanced by the accessories that surrounded the posing model. The furniture linked the figure both physically and symbolically with the backdrop and contributed to enhance the realism of this scenery.

VALLETO Y CÍA STUDIO'S ADAPTABLE PIECE OF FURNITURE

Photographic studios should have several pieces of furniture to stage every picture inside the cabinet. The combinations yielded very different results.

In the Valleto brothers studio there was quite a large piece of adaptable furniture, made out of carved wood, with four different vistas. This piece had accessories like a drawer, shelf, or a mirror that turned it alternatively into a writing desk, a cabinet, a chimney, or a religious altar among others. The change was highlighted with the addition of several decorations such as sculptures, a clock or framed pictures.

OCTAVIANO DE LA MORA'S "COQUETA" PIECE AND BENCH, AND JOSÉ LUIS REQUENA'S CHAIR

The three pieces in exhibition belonged to two photographers, a professional and an amateur: the "coqueta" pieces included a dresser and a mirror, used in ladies' rooms for their beauty routine. Octaviano De La Mora, a photographer from Jalisco, who arrived at Mexico City in 1890, used this piece to stage young ladies' portraits. The tiny wooden table also belonged to his photographic study, and thanks to available portraits, we know he used it to photograph children, who he placed next to it with toys and objects appropriate to their age.

The eclectic-style chair with the little figureheads in the armrests belonged to amateur photographer José Luis Requena. It is a highly decorated piece, the type of pieces used in commercial photography studios at the time. This piece can be seen in the portraits he did of his wife Angela, with two of their daughters, Angela and Guadalupe.

PHOTOGRAPHY AS ILLUSTRATION AND SOURCE FOR LITHOGRAPHS

Photography revolutionized the way chronicles and news were presented both in books and in the press. After photographs were printed in paper there were two ways for using portraiture in print, the first of the a little unusual, and it consisted in gluing an original paper photograph to the book. An example of that is *Veladas literarias* (1867), Guillermo Prieto's book; the photographic reproduction of Eugenio Landesio's painting illustrating a chapter on the excursion in the *Caverna de Cacahuamilpa* (1868); and a third example shows how foreign guides and manuals used images to show or guide photography's technical processes.

On the other hand, photography was the material for creating illustrations, reduced portraits and landscapes in lithograph or engraving. In this display there are three examples of lithographs based on Mexican photographs with their respective credit: actor Manuel Catalina's portrait, based on a portrait taken by Latapí y Martel, illustrating a book dedicated to the stage actor; 1868 *El Semanario Ilustrado*, including José Ignacio Durán's effigy, originally captured by Cruces y Campa's lens; and lastly, a photograph of a train derailment in Tlalpan, registered by the Vallete brothers, reproduced as a lithograph to illustrate the sensational news in *El Renacimiento* magazine 1868.

THE PARTICULARITY OF OPALOTYPES

Opalotypes, as well as daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and ferrotypes, are camera images, that is to say, portraits taken without using a negative. The reactive surface imprinted with the portrait was the exposed to the light inside the camera.

The surface, or base for opalotypes was a white opaque glass that contrasted with the portrait's darkness, and at the same time allowed for a translucent material effect. By illuminating the portrait from behind an impressive effect was achieved. The technique was patented in 1857.

In Mexico there were few opalotypes, although there are several examples from 1860 to the first decades of the 20th Century. These portraits were appreciated for the smooth surface, since it seemed like a porcelain containing a person's portrait.

CHILDREN'S PORTRAITS: CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Some of the most sought after photographs were of the youngest family members because of the high child mortality rate in Mexico. Half of lactating children died before their first birthday, so parents did not have any certainty their kids would reach adult age.

Every birthday was truly a celebration of life; it became customary to have the child's picture taken in those days, so they appear surrounded by dolls and toys –precisely their birthday gifts. Children's portraits in the 19th Century show how they were represented and perceived in their social surroundings. These reflect an image of solemnity, unnatural for their young age and nature. In that society, appearances were valued over spontaneity. Children's outfits, mainly, were the same as adults; this along with their attitude when posing with the objects surrounding them make them look like tiny adults.

THE FIRST COMMUNION

The catholic ceremony of the first communion, performed by young children between ten and fourteen years old, has its origin in the Middle Ages. Ever since the 12th Century, it was a private and unseen act, since children were not seen as relevant subjects in ancient societies.

The religious ceremony became more and more important, and in the second half of the 19th Century it became a significant social event for children who transitioned from childhood into adolescence. For the religious rite, boys used an elegant attire in black or white, a white ribbon in the arm symbolizing innocence; girls used a white dress and a veil representing their purity; both had to use a candle alight, a symbol of their catholic faith.

The representations of the first communion inside the studio were testimonials of the child's faith before the Church and their social circle. As several portraits show, there were times when priests joined children in the photo studio to pose alongside them.

CORNERSTONE: THE WEDDING PICTURE

From 1860 onwards, one of the most commercially sought uses of photography was as a wedding memento. These portraits were proof of the moral commitment acquired with society and a testimony of fidelity and durability, since it meant also the beginning of a new family.

By the mid 1860s, brides in Mexico began using white dresses and having their picture taken; in these years, the elements, symbols and poses of the wedding picture were established. The register evoked and perpetuated a moment and the different copies, with kind dedications, were distributed among family and close friends.

Matrimony was one of the three sacraments represented in the photographic studio. Baptism mementos were somewhat less popular; the first communion memento had a large commercial success.

THE LAST TOKEN: PORTRAYING THE DEAD

The mortality rate in the 19th Century went up in large urban centers. The high concentration of people in limited spaces made them more susceptible to sickness and infection.

Post-mortem photographs (“After death”), managed to capture both what the animate and the inanimate; the ephemeral and the permanent. Photography was ideal for keeping a memory of a loved one, the final register in the family’s chronicle.

This photographic genre of the 19th Century captured all sorts of poses. The dead seemed to sleep, they were sat in chairs, lay in coffins and even their relatives posed next to them.

Dead children were dressed as angels, and were placed in the middle of a symbolic and religious stage set that alluded to the purity of the child’s soul. To remember these people, their portraits sometimes were framed in compositions along with artificial flowers, laces and black ribbons to mark their mourning.

POMP AND OSTENTATION IN MEXICAN CLERGY

The years between the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century was characterized by a reconciliation between church and state during Porfirio Díaz reign. After his third reelection, the interests of church and state were negotiated and Mexican Catholics were allowed to group politically. Octaviano de la Mora, photographer from Jalisco, relocated his studio from Guadalajara to Mexico City in 1890, after 25 years working in Jalisco's capital. His fame preceded his arrival thanks to the quality of his portraits. At the beginning of that decade, Octaviano de la Mora, Antíoco Cruces and other photographers took a series of photographs of Mexican clergymen.

The highest church authorities' portraits were sold in different formats, from large prints to the popular *carte-de-visite*. These images help us appreciate their ostentation, particularly in the full length portraits. These show an extraordinary luxury in their setting, as well as the lavish elegance in their religious garments of the most important Mexican bishops. This portrait collection was very popular in printed publications on the occasion of the crowning of the Virgin of Guadalupe in 1895.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND RELIGIOUS DEVOTION

For Mexicans, a mostly catholic population in the 19th Century, these portraits were the ideal medium to testify to their beliefs and faith. Photography documented their religious devotion, and at the same time, it was a representation of their religiosity, a proof of their existence as God's children.

Infants were represented as little Franciscan friars or little Christs, who carried the cross as a symbol of their pain. The innocence of children contrasted against these highly symbolic representations.

Photographs of nuns intended to serve as record of their life inside the convent. Photographers had to transmit the austerity, the modesty, humility of these nuns, and surely some of the portraits were taken in their novitiate ceremony.

GENEALOGIES AND POWER RELATIONSHIPS

Trims [*Orlas*] were mosaics created with portraits of a particular group of politicians, soldiers, or members of a particular government, to record their members.

Throughout the 19th Century lithography and photographs were understood to be powerful propaganda tools that allowed for the creation of a public image and to present a particular perspective of the political reality.

This type of mosaics wanted to honor heroes, public people or distinguished rulers, but it was also a visual representation that created and reinforced political associations and links Some of these *orlas* were photographic reproductions of collages, and other were made up of original photographs and they showed the hand-made illustrations created to decorate and link the portraits.

One of the oldest examples of these mosaics was the montage created by Valletto y Cía studio around 1866, with the image of empress Carlota surrounded by her ladies.

A WALL OF CELEBRITIES

This section intends to show portraits of some of the most famous people of politics, culture, economics and society between the years of 1860 and 1910. Carmen Mondragón, a child then, stands out; she would later be known as Nahui Ollin, photographed by Octaviano de la Mora around 1897. Technically, Mexican national anthem composer Jaime Nunó's portrait stands out, registered by Manuel Torres' camera in 1902.

Two more that stand out as well are Carmelita Romero Rubio de Díaz's, from around 1881, and Sara and Francisco I. Madero's wedding portraits from 1903, both created in the Valleto brothers' studio in Mexico City.

POLITICAL PRISONERS IN 1885

These nine portraits, eight individual ones, one as a group, are the photographic record of detained students and journalists in 1885.

From 1884, the year Porfirio Díaz returned to power for his second presidential term, the control methods were tougher. All the discontent expressed through the press were repressed with all the rigor possible and laws in the country were being manipulated. The use of force against editors and journalist was frequent, and they were accused of libel and insurrection and were jailed.

In 1885 there was a fundamental break in the relationship between the independent press and the Diaz government. Because the national debt had been converted and consolidated by presidential decree, and it included the English debt which provoked popular outrage in 1884, several journalists ended up in jail.

Journalists like Enrique Chavarrí (from *El Monitor Republicano*) and Adolfo Carillo were detained on July 6 and 7, and on the 8th they were formally charged with insurrection intent and slandering the authorities. After a harsh polemic between the press and the government, on November 7, 1885, the First Courroom of the Supreme Court, even though the crimes of insurrection, of libeling the president and insulting the authorities, the jailed students and journalists received more lenient sentences. Enrique Chavarrí was assigned four and a half months in prison and a fine of fifty pesos.

REGISTRATION AND PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTROL OF PROSTITUTION

Starting on 1855, Mexico City's authorities followed European theories and models for controlling inmates, who were photographed to keep records in case they escaped. During the decade of 1860, photographic records were kept to patrol the health and hygiene of the capital's prostitutes.

The photographic album "Colección de prostitutas del c. gobernadora Juan José Baz", includes 1,055 portraits, compiled starting on 1868, most of them taken by Joaquín Díaz González, who even cast his signature on some of them.

The album shows the women's face, name, registration number, and they pose with different expressions: some with pain or shame at being photographed; others intent on striking a puritan pose, and others have a much more overt and even challenging look in their face. One has to consider that most of these prostitutes came from the lower classes and this must have been their first contact with photography. Many photographs follow the conventions of the bourgeois portrait and reveal that even though they were trying to define how an id photograph should look, there were still no "scientific" records.

In another group, the nine records of public women at the beginning of the 20th Century in the State of Mexico, reflect a common profile in them: most of them were orphans, single, had no children, worked as "chamber maid, laundress or house maid", who had no person who could "speak for them". These are terrible descriptions of the cruel realities of women who worked as prostitutes around 1910.

PORTRAITS AS IDENTIFICATIONS

From the decade of 1850, with the first procedures in paper, photographs were used as identifications. It was used in official documents, passports and identification cards, as a means of social control and institutional registration. Certifications and diplomas included the oval shaped portrait of the person.

María de Jesús Lagos' certificate, the widow of General Juan de la Luz Enríquez, governor of Veracruz, is a document that certifies the lifelong pension Congress granted her in 1892. Her daughters will keep the pension until they marry and his sons will benefit from it until they become 21, that is to say until they are of age, or once they enter the military. In the certificate, there are sealed photographs of each of the beneficiaries as proof of their identity. The application was promoted by the president, since Juan de la Luz Enríquez had been a distinguished soldier who fought against the French along with Mariano Escobedo and Porfirio Díaz.

PORTRAITS AS TESTIMONY

In the 19th Century photography was used to have an image and proof of the occupation and trade of people. It was common for people to have their picture taken in their work clothes or uniform, as well as objects that identified them. Pianos, paintings, easels, theodolite, bicycles, or globes, were part of the studio's temporary furniture as testimony of the different trades and work. The attire and work clothes individualized each person, as with post men, soldiers or cooks.

The portrait of the unidentified child posing with a diploma and books is a testimony of the rewards and gifts for children with the highest academic grades given by president Porfirio Díaz at the beginning of the 20th Century.

PHOTOGRAPHY AS SOCIAL PRINTED MATERIAL

The commercial uses of portrait during the second half of the 19th Century were so diverse that photography developed a wide variety of applications.

A portrait or a vista reproduced in photographic paper was pasted on a previously printed cardboard. That yielded text and images for invitations or other social occasions. The nature of these documents were diverse: from a banquet or ceremony invitation, a note on an anniversary or opening, or a *carte-de-visite* for a wedding printout.

WOMEN PHOTOGRAPHERS IN MEXICO

In the 1860s private photography classes for women were announced, and from the 1870s onward, photography began being taught as a class in private schools, as well as for women in the Escuela de Artes y Oficios in Mexico City, and other similar education centers in other states of the country.

The first woman photographer to establish her studio in Mexico City was María Guadalupe Suarez in 1881, on Chiconautla #3; she was an editor and proprietor of several vistas of Mexico City that were sold under the title *Álbum Fotográfico de México*, and here is the photograph of 5 de Mayo street, with the National Theater in the background.

On display also are portraits created by Natalia Baquedano, who came from Querétaro and founded his “Fotografía Nacional” studio in Mexico City in 1898, with great commercial success.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, photographers’ widows or sisters remained in charge of the studios, like Victoria Torres, sister of Manuel and Felipe Torres, or Ana and Elena Arriaga, who founded their studio in 1904, and who apparently specialized in female portraiture.

PORTRAITS AS TESTIMONY OF BONDS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Group portraits responded to a desire to legitimize the bonds between people, being family, friends or to mark a commercial or economic relationship. The photographer's job was to reflect that, he or she directed the shot and assigned places to family members in order to achieve an harmonic composition of the group and to transmit the values of respect and hierarchy within the group. In these portraits, children appeared as tiny adults with kind but solemn expression. Posing rigidly and severely, in some cases, they hardly smiled timidly.

If the shot was too wide or it included a number of people in the composition, the photographer must include several backdrops in the studio to amplify the photographic space. He or she also had to place the furniture in the best way possible, as well as the models' poses, including the use of drapery and curtains. Sometimes the result of the juxtaposition of backdrops was a strange combination where perspectives did not coincide harmoniously.

OPERA ACTORS AND SINGERS

In Mexico, beginning in 1860, people started collecting celebrities' portraits: politicians, soldiers, clergymen, royalty or members of showbusiness, like dance, opera or theater. Photography consolidated and expanded the devotion to these characters.

At the end of the 1860s, Mexico saw the introduction of a new photographic format called the "American card" or *cabinet*, which was at least three times larger than the *carte-de-visite*. *Cabinets* measured 11 x 16.5 centimeters, a larger size that allowed for more details. One of the first studios producing this format was the Valletto brothers, who in the 1870s, along with Francisco Casanova's studio, specialized in photographing theater actors who worked in Mexico City.

Actors arrived from abroad with photographs to give away, or they took their picture in Mexico City to have it circulate among journalists, editors, or their friends. They might use their daily clothes or even, on occasions, chose to pose in character.

During the 1860s and 1870s, it was uncommon for people to know what public figures looked like, since the press was hardly illustrated. The power of photography had, among other roles, to spread opera actors and singers' visage among relevant people, and among the national papers main chroniclers; their images were visual aids to their performance's review.

STREET ENTERTAINERS

This series of photographs shows us a variety of street artists: musicians, circus performers, and performers who worked in popular shows in Mexico. Some small companies of acrobats, clowns and musicians worked the streets and neighborhoods in Mexico City; they worked on plazas in every city of the country.

In the second half of the 19th Century, circus were formally established. They included trapeze acts, acrobats, jugglers and strong men who marveled the Mexican public with their skills and extraordinary abilities. Some of them circulated their commercial portrait.

Bullfighter from Pachuca Vicente Segura's portrait stands out; he posed without a shirt, as a "strong man", and the series of impresarios with four Oriental contortionist children working in Mexico.

ORCHESTRAS AND STUDENT MUSIC GROUPS

Among the pieces Carlos Monsiváis collected a red velvet album with 35 photographs stands out; it includes portraits of the members of the Sociedad Filarmónica “Mariano Jiménez”. This musical group debuted on October 23 in Morelia, Michoacán, directed by musician and soldier, Capitan Encarnación Payén, who selected the 35 young persons included in the musical group.

The philharmonic, with its ample repertoire including waltzes, pasodobles, marches, mazurcas and chotís, played on the country’s different theaters and also went on long tours of the United States to great success. They played in states like Illinois, Louisiana and California, among others. The account of those concerts are chronicles of popular success of a group of talented Mexicans. In his career as musician, Payen earned many prizes, trophies, medals and crowns. In 1892 he travelled to Spain in occasion of the fourth centenary of the so-called “discovery of America”. He offered concerts and serenades to Queen regent María Cristina de Habsburgo-Lorena and the Spanish royal family.

A few months after the creation of the group, the students gave this album with the 35 members portraits, dated March 25, 1887, as a token of love and gratitude for their mentor. The gallery opens with the musical director’s image, taken in New Orleans; 35 portraits of the young musicians follow, captured by Manuel Torres’ lens, master of the photography studio in the Escuela de Artes y Oficios at Morelia, and a colleague of Payén himself.

PRESIDENT PORFIRIO DÍAZ'S IMAGE

Porfirio Díaz had such importance in Mexico history that the 31 years he was president of the country is called the *Porfiriato*. From 1880 to 1884 was the only time that Manuel González had that position. Díaz was both witness and main player of the main historical events of the 19th Century.

As a political propaganda strategy, his portrait was reproduced in an infinite number of paintings, stamps, posters, printouts, official editions, textbooks, magazines, music sheets, and a rich variety of *souvenirs*, among many other objects. At 80 years old he celebrated the Mexican Independence's centenary; such a celebration was a manifestation of the power of his rule. That moment was the apex of his image and figure's circulation.

The series of Porfirio Díaz photographs allow us to see a man of will and obstinate personality, his dashing and martial appearance was a result of his military formation that defined his life. By 1910 he wore his triumphs in a great number of medals and decorations. Among the portraits for the centenary celebration Frank L. Clarke's and the one edited by Pablo Viau stand out.

Almost every hero, leaders and presidents' gaze, when portrayed looking directly at the camera, seems aloof, like a gaze into the horizon, fixed on an vague point; President Díaz' in the portrait edited by Pablo Viau in large format photographic paper, is not like that. He is looking directly at the camera, with the certainty of what he represents for his country, as Carlos Monsiváis said: "Díaz's personality is irrefutable. But it is made up of a 30 year dictatorship, [...] He is not a person who we know, and whose face supremely calls our attention; he is a dictator."

BOURGEOISE COSTUME AND FANTASY

This series of portraits proves the continuity in Mexicans preference for costumes. People not only dressed up with masks and fancy dress for the Lent carnival, but also for parties and social occasions. This was an opportunity of dress up in another identity.

For this sort of portraits there was a complicity between photographer and subject: the camera artist proposed the suitable backdrop, furniture and objects for the scene; the subject “represented” his other identity, in many cases including a playful attitude towards the camera.

Dressed up people went to the studio to mark events or parties individually or as a group, and they adopted poses and attitudes according to the selected artifice. For it, costumes could be as varied as we can see: European peasants, gypsies, soldiers, postillion, French courtesans, Romans or Greeks, pages, musketeers, kings or they recreated concepts as in the portrait of the three ladies who represented music, the night and a “bird coop”. There was no limit to the imagination in representing this sort of portraits, so common in Mexican middle class and high bourgeoisie.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND ILLUSTRATED PRESS

At the beginning of the 1890s, photographic reproductions created with photomechanic processes were a reality. Photography had a new impulse with the demand from papers, books and magazines who wanted to illustrate their pages with photographs.

By the end of the 19th Century, the new technology of silver gelatin allowed photographers who collaborated with those media to move easier in capturing their vistas, since they had to carry less instruments. In the first decade of the 20th Century allowed them to photograph situations in which people or vehicles in motion were present, for example the fights with flowers during the Porfiriato, or the military parades or marches during the revolutionary conflict.

JOSÉ LUIS REQUENA ABREU: AN AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER

José Luis Requena (1860-1943), was a successful businessman and amateur photographer. Carlos Monsiváis collected a large number of pieces by him.

Requena was famous for furnishing his house in the Art Nouveau style, located in Santa Veracruz street #43. The third floor of his residence housed his studio and photography lab, where he developed and printed his images. He had the means to make large decorated curtains that served as backdrops for his portraits.

His wife Ángela Legarreta, and his sons José Luis, Ángela, Guadalupe, Manuel, Pedro and Luz were his practice models. Each portrait told a story with a different scene each time. The titles of his works exemplify the anecdotes: “A cook’s error”, “The broken doll”, “Do you love me, kitty?”, “His first pain”, “The children’s school”, “The little clown”, and “Testing at the shoe store”, among many others.

THE GREAT NOVELTY: ELECTRIC LIGHT IN THE STUDIOS

Starting in 1864, European photographers started lighting artificially their portraits with “magnesium tapes” or “lamps of burnt magnesium”; these devices created an instant and very bright glare.

Electric light arrived years later in Mexico as an extraordinary solution. At the end of the 19th Century, Mexican photographers used it to illuminate their models without depending on the ever changing sun light, at any time of day and no matter the climate. One of the first studios to use electric light was located at Profesa #1, next to the temple of the same name, between 1899 and 1905, which boasted of having “the only ground floor photography”. In sunny days, photographers still used natural light, but in low light evenings, they went electric.

With artificial light, shadows as an effect of the projection of the human figure appeared and reformulated the concept of lighting in portraits. Apart from using “the camera light” that is to say the source of light closest to the camera, the photographer had to avoid the shadow projected by other “additional” lighting, in such a way that shadows were artistic, soft, aesthetically pleasing. In the portraits of the two brides shot by the Valletto brothers at the beginning of the 20th Century we can appreciate the shadow as a novelty effect, created intentionally by the photographers.

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS AND PHOTOGRAPHY'S INSTANTANEITY

During the 1880s, the dry gelatin plate circulated in Mexico, a negative medium that could be used without the need of developing and setting the plate immediately after the shot, as it was done then. Photographic processes were being simplified more and more. This negative allowed for photographs with shorter shots, even in moving situations by using the shutter, a recent invention.

Portable cameras were created that forwent the tripod and were easily handled since they had preestablished controls. These artifacts were destined to a new market: the amateur photographer, which industries like Kodak, when it introduced in 1888 its first camera, dutifully identified. An example of that is amateur photographer Agustín Hagenbeck, who posed with his portable camera in the portrait taken by Wolfenstein.

In Mexico, professional and amateur photographers used these resources to capture daily image, of their gatherings in social clubs, their outings, picnics, family portraits, and of their property. Cameras and their accessories were expensive, and apart from being used in domestic spaces, were used by professional photographers to take shots in exteriors.

PORTRAIT AS IDENTIFICATION

Since the 1850s, with the first paper procedures, photography was used as a people registry in different institutions. It was used in official documents, like passports, identity cards, and other means of social control. Certificates, diplomas, professional diplomas included the person's portrait, but it was also common to past it into correspondence as personal proof. An example of this is seen in two letters sent to president Porfirio Díaz.

STREET ENTERTAINERS

This series of photographs shows us a variety of street artists: musicians, circus performers, and performers who worked in popular shows in Mexico. Some small companies of acrobats, clowns and musicians worked the streets and neighborhoods in Mexico City; they worked on plazas in every city of the country.

In the second half of the 19th Century, circus were formally established. They included trapeze acts, acrobats, jugglers and strong men who marveled the Mexican public with their skills and extraordinary abilities. Some of them circulated their commercial portrait.

Bullfighter from Pachuca Vicente Segura's portrait stands out; he posed without a shirt, as a "strong man", and the series of impresarios with four Oriental contortionist children working in Mexico.