

LA VIDA
ES BELLA:

FROM THE MARJORIE

MEXICAN
MODERNIST
TEXTILES

SKOURAS COLLECTION



THE MARJORIE SKOURAS
COLLECTION

LA VIDA ES BELLA: MEXICAN MODERNIST TEXTILES FROM THE MARJORIE SKOURAS COLLECTION 1961 – 1980

Exhibition Prospectus



Left: Designed by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1975 – Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery
Right: Designed by Roberta Vercellino y Luis, c. 1970 – Cotton manta, hand embroidery

The exhibition, «*La Vida es Bella: Mexican Modernist Textiles from Marjorie Skouras Collection*», presents the carefully-curated result of nearly a decade of collecting of a specific genre of Mexican clothing, dating from about 1960 to 1980, by the internationally-noted American designer Marjorie Skouras. This collection of mid-century Mexican couture stands alone as an unrecognized aspect of the Mexican modernist movement in the fine arts, novel in the annals of Mexican textile design. What makes the collection so dynamic is the interpretation of Surrealist, Abstract and Pop Art themes of the period, innovatively applied through the medium of fashion.

They reflect a Mexico galvanized by political, social, and artistic energies, the growing importance of Mexican nationalism, and the economic development of palatial beach resorts designed to attract international, and especially American, tourism. The designers whose clothing is represented in this exhibition were widely inspired by Mexican indigenous cultural heritage, pre-Columbian imagery, and nature. Overlooked in the history of Mexican design, these mid-century modernist garments aspire to a place in the cultural legacy of Mexico.

Many designers made contributions to the new expression of Mexican modernist resort wear in the 1960s and 1970s, most notably Josefa Ibarra, Georgia Charuhas, Roberta Vercellino y Luis, Gonzalo Bauer, Tachi Castillo, Victor Camarena, Diana Martin, Diseños Delfis de Tlaquepaque, Irene Pulos, and Telas Escalera, as well as those who collaborated with independent boutiques, such as Mama Carlota, El Aguila Descalza in Boston, Massachusetts (the brand created by Josefa Ibarra and her business partner Ana Villa), and The Phoenix in Washington, DC.

Originating in 1961 with the designs of Josefa Ibarra in Puerto Vallarta, Mexican modernist-style resort clothing quickly expanded in form and distribution. Josefa's long dresses and caftans became a nearly instant international success, especially in the United States where they collided with the craze for hostess gowns, and her success spurred other designers to participate in this new fashion trend.



Design by Roberta Vercellino y Luis, c. 1970 – Cotton manta, appliqué, cotton ribbon, ceramic beads

While all the garments were handmade in Mexico—in the traditional centers of dressmaking in Puerto Vallarta, Tlaquepaque, Mexico City, Oaxaca, and Michoacán—this group of designers challenged conventional approaches to design, the use of materials, and construction. They were the first to elevate manta, a common hand-loomed cotton fabric, used for centuries, into a material for high fashion. The designers worked with local artisans to fabricate and embellish the pieces, sometimes incorporating folk elements such as embroidery, ribbons, metal, and wood, linking traditional and contemporary design in colorful, effusive, and vibrant ways. New dye techniques, specifically cross-dyed manta, were developed in the early 1970s at the Fabrica de San Pedro in Uruapan, Michoacán. The cloth was employed with exuberant color combinations, robustly referencing Pop and Op Art.

La vida es bella: Mexican Modernist Textiles from The Marjorie Skouras Collection documents this unprecedented era in the history of Mexican fashion design, and gives an insight into the way in which Mexican traditional crafts were reinterpreted and modernized. It also confirms how the exhibition's featured designers contributed to the rise of Mexican design on the international scene.

The exhibition is composed entirely of pieces from the collection of the American product and interior designer Marjorie Skouras, who sourced and curated the pieces, and it reflects her lifelong passion for Mexico, its land, people, design, architecture, and food. This unique and beautifully curated collection reflects Skouras's refined eye for color and originality. A complete biography of the collector is available [here](#).

A book on the Marjorie Skouras Collection of Mexican modernist resort fashion is currently in development. The collection is presently on view in the exhibition, *"Transposición: El Arte Popular Reinterpretado - La Moda de los 60s-70s - La Colección Marjorie Skouras"* at the Museo de Arte Popular de Yucatán in Mérida, Mexico.



Left: Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1980 – Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery
Right: Design by Telas Tlaquepaque, c. 1970 – Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

Roberta Vercellino y Luis' abstract geometric shapes, the mythological creatures of Victor Camarena, Josefa Ibarra's sophisticated modernization of traditional Mexican garments, and Gonzalo Bauer's joyous and often whimsical reinterpretations of folk art are just some of the themes to be discovered in this exhibition of Mexican modernist fashion. Telas Escalera's batik fabrics, which were used by many of the designers in this group, feature both Mayan and folk art-inspired patterns.

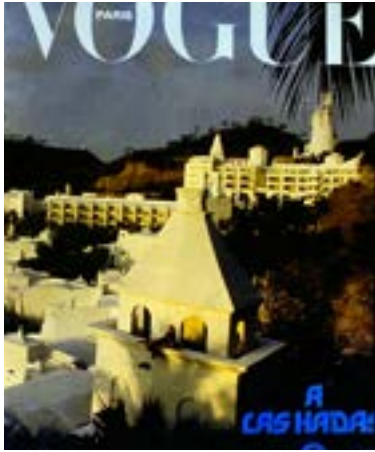
While Mexican designers are primarily featured in the exhibition, there are also foreign designers, including Irene Pulos, Georgia Charuhas, and Diana Martin. Like so many artists and designers before them, they fell in love with Mexico and chose to live and work there, making significant contributions to Mexican couture by embracing and celebrating the culture of their adopted land.

The exhibition presents an extensive selection of archives, revealing the vibrant context in which these garments were created. The "Archive Collage," a graphic assemblage conceptualized as a designer's inspiration board and composed of a range of evocative images and advertisements of the period, presents an intimate view of the creative process. Much of this archival material was preserved in Josefa Ibarra's personal trunk, which is also included in the exhibition. Left at her house in Lake Chapala after her death, it contained period photographs, both personal and editorial, articles of clothing from her early collections, and rare patterns and sketches of the designs that are featured in the exhibition.

The American designer and painter Georgia Charuhas, who currently lives and works in Mérida, Yucatán, also contributed to the archival material by lending digital photographs of her original sketches, two of which are related to dresses featured in the exhibition, as well as advertisements and newspaper articles of the period.

An 8-minute archival video of an interview with Mexican designer Josefa Ibarra and her business partner Ana Villa, broadcast on Good Morning Boston!, offers insight into the production process of Josefa's designs as well as her inspirations. It includes scenes of a fashion show of her designs, several of which are on display in the exhibition.

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6



1 - Paris Vogue Cover, c.1970-1980

2 - Picture from Josefa Ibarra, c.1970-1980

3 - Note on a Cabo San Lucas Hotel letter paper, c.1970-1980

4 - Fashion show pamphlet with designs by Josefa Ibarra and Gonzalo Bauer

5 - Josefa Ibarra's personal trunk with her own personal clothing, c.1960-2010

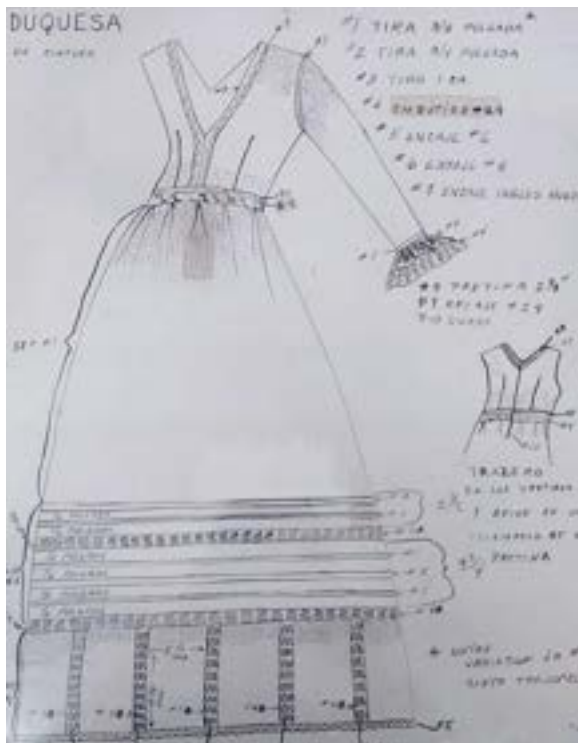
6 - Newspaper clipping from Josefa Ibarra's scrapbook, c.1970-1980

7 - Picture from Josefa Ibarra, c.1970-1980

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EXHIBITION INFORMATION

- The exhibition is available for loan starting March 15, 2023.
- The exhibition includes up to 108 garments from The Marjorie Skouras Collection, 90 historical documents, 70 photographs, 1 wood trunk, and 1 archival video.
- Marjorie Skouras Design will provide advice and conceptual design on the proposed layout for the venue for a fee of US\$10,000. Marjorie Skouras Design LLC can provide custom made iron mannequins upon request.
- The size of the exhibition will vary depending on the number of pieces selected. We suggest a minimum of 1000 square feet.
- The rental fee for the exhibition is US\$9,000 in addition to shipping and insurance fees that will be determined upon the final touring schedule.
- Participating institutions must meet required standards for climate control and security.



LEFT: Georgia Charuhas, «*Duquesa*» design sketch, c. 1970. Digital print

RIGHT: «*Duquesa*» design by Georgia Charuhas – Cotton, velvet ribbon, lace

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PRESS

- Vogue Mexico & Latin America February 2023- [Here](#)
- Yucatán Government Press Room - [Here](#)
- Yucatán Today Article - [Here](#)
- SOMA Article - [Here](#)
- SIPSE Article - [Here](#)
- Spotify Playlist - [Here](#)

Photography: Pim Schalkwijk, courtesy of The Marjorie Skouras Collection

Model: Ana Isabel Carmona

SELECTED EXHIBITION DESIGNERS

- Mama Carlota, p. 10–14
- Roberta Vercellino y Luis, p. 15–27
- Josefa Ibarra, p. 28–62
- Yolanda, p. 63–64
- Victor Camarena, p. 65–73
- Gonzalo Bauer, p. 74–84
- Georgia Charuhas, p. 85–88
- Telas Escalera, p. 89–95
- Telas Tlaquepaque y Diseños Delfis, p. Page 96–103
- Irene Pulos, p. 104–109
- Diana Martin of Opus 1, p. 110–112
- Tachi Castillo, p. 113–114
- Jacaranda, p. 115
- Sergio Bustamante, p. 116
- Other Designers, p. 117 to 121



1. «*Rising Sun*», design by Victor Camarena for Mama Carlota, c. 1968
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



2. Design by Victor Camarena for Mama Carlota, c. 1970
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



3. Design by Victor Camarena for Mama Carlota, c. 1970
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



4. Design by Mama Carlota with Telas Escalera, c. 1968
Cotton manta, Telas Escalera batik sleeves, hand embroidery



5. Design by Mama Carlota with Telas Escalera, c. 1968
Cotton manta, Telas Escalera batik panels, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



6. Design by Roberta Vercellino y Luis, c. 1970
Cotton manta, cotton ribbon, appliqué hand embroidery



7. Design by Roberta Vercellino y Luis, c. 1970
Cotton manta, cotton ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



8. Design by Roberta Vercellino y Luis, c. 1970
Cotton manta, cotton ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



9. Vercellino Designs, c. 1965
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



9. Vercellino Designs, detail hand embroidery



10. Vercellino Designs, c. 1968
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



11. Vercellino Designs, c. 1968
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



12. Design by Roberta Vercellino y Luis, c. 1968
Cotton manta, cotton ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



13. Design by Roberta Vercellino y Luis, c. 1968
Cotton manta, cotton ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



14. Design by Roberta Vercellino y Luis, c. 1970
Cotton manta, cotton ribbon, appliqué and ceramic beads



14. Design by Roberta Vercellino y Luis, detail back view



15. Roberta Vercellino y Luis, c. 1970
Cotton manta, hand embroidery



15. Roberta Vercellino y Luis, detail hand embroidery



16. "Collage" design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1970
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



16. "Collage" design by Josefa Ibarra, detail back view



17. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1975
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



18. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1975
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



19. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1980
Cotton manta, satin ribbon



20. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1970
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, hand embroidery



21. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1975 (back view)
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, hand embroidery



22. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1975
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, hand embroidery



23. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1970
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



24. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1970
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



25. "Miraflores" design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1970
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



26. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1974
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



27. *"Playa Azul"* design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1968
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



27. *"Playa Azul"* design by Josefa Ibarra, detail back view



28. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1968
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



28. Design by Josefa Ibarra, detail hand embroidery



29. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1968
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



30. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1967
Cotton gauze, hand embroidery



31. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1975
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, hand embroidery



32. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1970
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery, tassels



33. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1970 (back view)
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



Josefa Ibarra, *Unknown*, c. 1970 – Cotton manta, applique and hand embroidery



34. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1970
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



35. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1975
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



36. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1970
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



37. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1975
Cotton manta, patchwork appliqué, hand embroidery



38. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1970
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery, tassels



39. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1975
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



39. Design by Josefa Ibarra, detail hand embroidery



40. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1968
Cotton manta, appliqué



41. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1965
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



42. Design by Josefa Ibarra for Dell, c. 1970 (back view)
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



43. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1980 (back view)
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



44. Design by Josefa Ibarra, c. 1975
Cotton manta, hand embroidery, fringe



44. Design by Josefa Ibarra, detail back view



45. Design by Yolanda, c. 1970
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



45. Design by Yolanda, detail appliqué and hand embroidery



46. Design by Victor Camarena, c. 1968
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery, fringe



47. Design by Victor Camarena, c. 1975 (back view)
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery, wood beads



48. Design by Victor Camarena, c. 1975
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



49. Design by Victor Camarena, c. 1975 (back view)
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



50. Design by Victor Camarena, c. 1968 (back view)
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



51. Design by Victor Camarena, c. 1975
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



52. Design by Victor Camarena, c. 1970
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



53. Design by Victor Camarena, c. 1978
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



54. Design by Victor Camarena, c. 1978
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



55. Top: "W 10 B" design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1967
Cotton manta
Skirt: Design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1967
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



56. "T 22 L" design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1969
Cotton manta, lace ribbon, soutache



57. Design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1969
Cotton manta, hand embroidery



58. Top: Design by Tachi Castillo, c. 1970
Cotton pin tuck
Skirt: Design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1970
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



58. Skirt design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, detail hand embroidery



59. Design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1970
Cotton manta, ribbon, soutache, buttons



60. Top: Design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1966
Cotton manta, soutache
Skirt: Design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1966
Cotton manta, wool embroidery



61. Top: Design by Jacaranda, c. 1962
Cotton, appliqué, hand embroidery
Skirt: Design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1968
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



62. Design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1974
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



63. Top: Design by Roberta Vercellino y Luis, c. 1970
Cotton manta, cotton ribbon appliqué
Skirt: Design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1970
Cotton manta, cotton ribbon appliqué, hand embroidery



64. Top: Design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1967
Cotton manta
Skirt: Design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1967
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



65. Design by Georgia Charuhas, c. 1970
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, velvet ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



66. "*Cinderella*" design by Georgia Charuhas, c. 1970
Cotton manta, appliqué, lace, hand embroidery



67. *"Duquesa"* design by Georgia Charuhas, c. 1970
Cotton manta, velvet ribbon, lace



68. Design by Georgia Charuhas, c. 1965
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, lace, appliqué, hand embroidery



69. Design by Telas Escalera, c. 1968
Cotton batik



70. Design by Telas Escalera, c. 1968
Cotton batik



71. Design by Telas Escalera, c. 1968
Cotton batik



72. Design by Telas Escalera, c. 1966
Cotton batik



73. Design by Telas Escalera for Del Marqués, c. 1970
Cotton batik



74. Design by Telas Escalera, c. 1968
Cotton batik



75. Design by Telas Escalera, c. 1970
Cotton batik



76. Design by Telas Tlaquepaque, c. 1970
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



77. Design by Telas Tlaquepaque, c. 1967
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



78. Design by Telas Tlaquepaque, c. 1967
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



79. Design by Diseños Delfis, c. 1970
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



80. Design by Diseños Delfis, c. 1970
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



81. Design by Telas Tlaquepaque for Diseños Delfis, c. 1967
Cotton manta, hand embroidery



82. Design by Disenos Delfis Tlaquepaque, c. 1975
Cotton, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



83. Top: Design by Diseños Delfis, c. 1970
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery
Skirt: Design by Gonzalo Bauer for Girasol, c. 1965
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



84. Ensemble design by Irene Pulos, c. 1980
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



85. Design by Irene Pulos, c. 1975
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



86. Design by Irene Pulos, c. 1980
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



87. Design by Irene Pulos, c. 1967
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



88. Top: Design by Irene Pulos, c. 1975
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, hand embroidery
Skirt: Design by Tachi Catillo, c. 1964
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



88. Top design by Irene Pulos and skirt design by Tachi Catillo, detail back view



89. Design by Diana Martin for Opus 1, c. 1976
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, appliqué, hand embroidery



90. Design by Diana Martin for Opus 1, c. 1974
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, hand embroidery, fringe



90. Design by Diana Martin for Opus 1, detail hand embroidery and fringe



91. Design by Tachi Castillo, c. 1970
Cotton manta, cotton lace



92. Top: Design by Tachi Castillo, c. 1975 (back view)
Cotton, satin ribbon
Pants: Design by Kristian, c. 1976
Cotton batik



93. Design by Jacaranda, c. 1970
Cotton manta, hand embroidery



94. Design by Sergio Bustamante, c. 1970
Cotton manta, appliqué, hand embroidery



95. Design by Suzette International, c. 1965
Cotton manta, lace, ribbon, soutache



96. Design by Papaya, c. 1970
Cotton manta, hand embroidery



97. Ensemble by unknown designer, c. 1970
Cotton manta, lace, cotton soutache appliqué



97. Ensemble by unknown designer, detail soutache appliqué



98. Design by Lirio's, c. 1970
Cotton manta, satin ribbon, hand embroidery, tie-dyed