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## Preserving Rivera and Kahlo: Photography and Reconstruction

Jorge Tárrago Mingo

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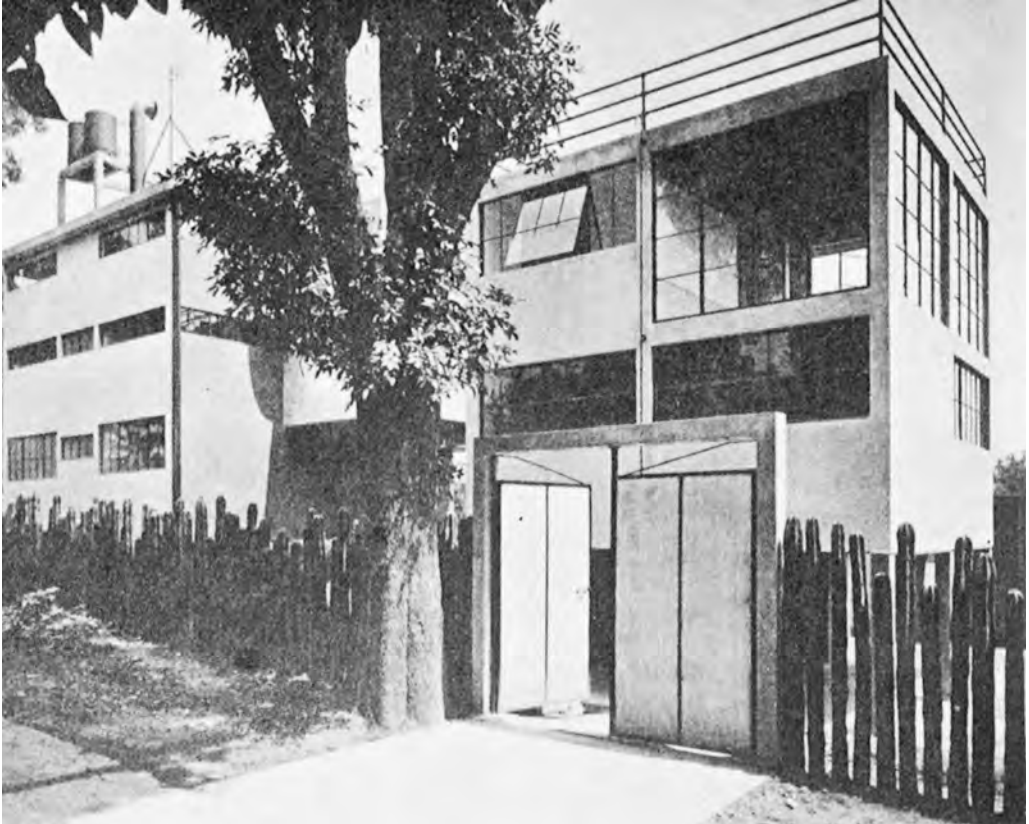
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1. House-studio of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, Juan O'Gorman, architect, 1932. Photograph by Guillermo Kahlo.

## Preserving Rivera and Kahlo Photography and Reconstruction

Several photographs taken in July 1932 by Guillermo Kahlo upon the completion of work on the houses and studios of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo—daughter of the photographer—were used for its reconstruction, which began in 1995 under the supervision of the architect Víctor Jiménez (Figure 1). The houses were reconstructed as closely as possible to the original photographs, because there were few perspectives or blueprints of the structures and installations in the archives of architect Juan O’Gorman. As Jiménez remarks, “the principal source of its reconstruction were seven pictures taken by [Guillermo] Kahlo the day it was completed, and three more taken later, in 1934, just after the houses had been furnished by its inhabitants.”<sup>1</sup> There are, however, many other pictures in which the couple pose or are pictured working in their house and studio.

The documentary and indicial value of photography—one of the medium’s fundamental characteristics—is undeniable as a primary source in the reconstruction of architectural space. Jiménez assured that, “thanks to photographic documentation, [the restoration] achieved a ‘close to a 98%’ faithful recuperation of the original space.”<sup>2</sup> However, the evolution of mechanical means of representation, foremost among them photography, holds inherent contradictions, as Palaia Pérez and Casar Pinazo have pointed out: “in the same way that they lose subjectivity being closer to technological procedures, they gain in apparent objectivity,” although these indicators of objectivity “may not, in any way guarantee the transmission of all the values that the object holds.”<sup>3</sup> Because of this, we could ask ourselves if we can, and even if we should, reconstruct through photographs the atmosphere transmitted by dozens of images that show us everyday, intimate scenes—that is, all the things that the images of Kahlo do not say.

Even though the conscientious inspection of photographs allows us to identify and place every object in its original position so that we achieve a very close reflection of a frozen instant, it is questionable whether the use of photography as the primary means of reconstructing architectural space reconstructs, as Roland Barthes said, “the necessarily real thing that has been placed in front of the lens”<sup>4</sup> or, to the contrary, reconstructs only the photographic image itself.

### **Reconstruction: 1995–97**

Controversial since their first public presentation, the studio-houses of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo and the small, attached photographic pavilion for Guillermo Kahlo were designed by Juan O’Gorman and built between 1931 and 1932 in San Angel Inn, a neighborhood in Mexico City.<sup>5</sup> There have been frequent comparisons between O’Gorman’s construction and other structures such as the Le Corbusier’s Maison Ozenfant and his prototype Citröhan, as well as the Russian Pavilion in the Exposition of Decorative Arts in Paris in 1925 designed by Constantin Melnikov. It is an inevitable comparison, in the first case, considering that even O’Gorman said that he consciously started the concept from the prototype of the Maison Ozenfant.<sup>6</sup> Some of the first critiques in the works of O’Gorman have considered the evident differences as “minor details.” In a more negative assessment, as E. Browne has pointed out, “the role of O’Gorman was just that he approached the European models more closely.”<sup>7</sup> On the contrary, recent revisions regarding the reception of architecture in Latin America — particularly in Mexico — have emphasized the local accents and the approbations to the modern creeds.<sup>8</sup> And in the specific case of the studio-houses of Rivera and Kahlo, all the later approaches, because of their reconstruction, have made a point of emphasizing the differences more than the reasonable similarities between the European models and the work of Juan O’Gorman (Figure 2).<sup>9</sup>

Even though the construction work was finished in July 1932, the couple would not start living there until the end of 1933, after a long stay in United States, where the painter completed several works and was commissioned by the Detroit Art Institute to paint the controversial murals that celebrate the automobile industry and Henry Ford, its main founder.<sup>10</sup> Both Diego and Frida lived in the houses at different periods until 1939, when the couple separated for the second time. There were longer periods in which only Diego lived in the house.<sup>11</sup>

During the 1940s and 1950s, the houses suffered alterations, extensions, and unsympathetic additions. From 1943 until Diego’s death in 1957, the houses were of secondary concern to him. The artist spent nearly one hundred thousand dollars and worked intermittently as an architect and builder of a tomb-pyramid-museum that would hold his collection of indigenous art in El Pedregal, a site that belonged to Frida.<sup>12</sup>

With Frida’s death in 1954 and Rivera’s three years later, the houses were inherited by their daughters, Ruth and Guadalupe Rivera Marín. Years later, the painter Rafael Coronel, Ruth’s second husband, bought Frida’s house from Guadalupe. After Ruth’s death in 1969, Rafael Coronel lived in the house for nearly twenty years, a period in which, yet again, it suffered several alterations. That period ended in the late 1970s, with



2. House-studio of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, 1932 (left) and 2006 (right). Photographs by Guillermo Kahlo (left) and Asier Santas (right).

intervention of architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, when the Mexican State bought the property. At the same time, Rafael Coronel donated Diego Rivera's collection of popular art and objects with the intention of creating a museum for the artist. The Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera was created by presidential decree on April 21, 1981, and opened its doors to the public in 1986 to celebrate the centenary of the birth of the Mexican painter and muralist. From 1995 until 1997, the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA) restored the properties, trying to recover their original state, and they became the symbol of functional Mexican architecture. Under the aegis the Cultural Program of 1997, the Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo opened that year, putting special emphasis on its role as an institution for research and cultural diffusion. For those reasons, the houses were declared a property of the Artistic Patrimony of the Nation.<sup>13</sup>

The basic documents for its reconstruction were the images Guillermo Kahlo took in 1932, and several of O'Gorman's drawings. As the architect Víctor Jiménez, who was in charge of the reconstruction project, explains:

The houses of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in San Ángel Inn could be restored with great fidelity thanks to the drawings of O'Gorman and because of the extraordinary photographs that Guillermo Kahlo took the very same day the work was finished. . . . They show the houses fully finished and as yet occupied, in 1932 . . . : they are seven images of exceptional quality, and we can add another three that were taken shortly afterwards, in 1934, once the house had just been furnished by its owners.<sup>14</sup>

The reconstruction of the houses tried to restore their original form in the closest possible manner, eliminating any alterations, reinforcing structural elements, and removing all the elements that were not reflected in the original photographs.

The restoration reset and reinforced the steel in all the pillars, without modifying their sections. Some brick walls were substituted with concrete walls so they would become more rigid, without showing any visible difference. The original colors of the houses were restored by carefully removing the exterior layers of paint. For the most part, all internal divisions were eliminated, including chimneys and the flooring of bathrooms that were not original. In the same way, other elements that had been removed were replaced, like the water tanks in the deck and the metal trash bins.<sup>15</sup> Put simply, apart from structural reinforcement, everything that was not in Kahlo's 1932 pictures was eliminated, and everything that had been documented in the same pictures was restored.

And here lies the critical aspect of the discussion. Trying to reconcile the reconstruction with the original architectonic aspect, and even its furnishings, shows the fundamental limitations, at least, none that are explained or discussed in depth from critical positions in the reconstruction environment. Effectively, as Jiménez says, "if we compare the pictures of Kahlo in 1932 with the houses just restored, we can appreciate, from the most objective point of view, how what we see now is the work of Juan O'Gorman."<sup>16</sup>

The result is a faithful portrait of the work *as constructed*. Even more, we could say that the reconstruction is a reflection of the work just as it was finished, at the precise moment when the pictures that were used for its reconstruction were taken. Now, can we say the same thing about the traces of its inhabitants? Or to say it better, are there any differences between what was photographed, what was reconstructed, and what was inhabited? Could we say that what we see now has the "soul" of Rivera and Kahlo? Isn't it important, considering the life experiences—intense in this particular case—of the houses? What should, in any case, be the so-called original state we should aim to restore?

### **Reconstruction: Photographic Expeditions**

In 1904, Guillermo Kahlo (b. 1872, Pforzeim, Germany; d. 1941 Mexico City), a German immigrant who arrived in Mexico in 1894, was hired by José Ives Limantour, minister of taxation in the government of Porfirio Díaz, to photograph Mexico's architectural patrimony (Figure 3). He took hundreds of pictures between 1904 and 1908, using German-made cameras and more than nine hundred glass plates. These photographs lack artistic interest, especially so if we consider that the



3. El Carmen, San Luis Potosí. Photograph by Guillermo Kahlo, as published in his *Iglesias de Mexico*, vol. 1, *Cúpulas*. (Mexico: Publicaciones de la Secretaría de Hacienda, 1924).

photographer had only learned the craft of photography shortly after arriving in Mexico. However, these facts do not diminish their importance. Most of them objectively register the buildings, and their documentary value makes up for their possible technical and artistic limitations.<sup>17</sup>

Guillermo Kahlo's photographs were supposed to serve as the illustrations for a series of luxurious, large format publications to celebrate the centenary of Mexican independence in 1910. But they would not be published until years later, in 1924–25, rescued from an undeserved oblivion. The publications

# IGLESIAS DE MEXICO

Volumen I.

CUPULAS

TEXTO Y DIBUJOS  
DEL DR. ATL



FOTOGRAFIAS  
DE KAHLO

La Cúpula es una síntesis espacial.  
Ella representa, en México, la óptima  
y la máxima expresión arquitectónica.

*Luis Moya* 1930

Publicaciones de la Secretaría de Hacienda

MEXICO

1924

4. Title page, *Iglesias de Mexico*, vol. 1, *Cúpulas*. (Mexico: Publicaciones de la Secretaría de Hacienda, 1924).

were funded by the Secretary of Finance, with texts and drawings by Dr. Atl (a pseudonym of Gerardo Murillo, a well-known painter, writer, critic, and political activist)<sup>18</sup> and Manuel Toussaint y Ritter, one of the major experts in colonial art.<sup>19</sup> Several are monographs, under the common title *Iglesias de México*<sup>20</sup> (Figure 4). With this belated publication of his earlier work, Kahlo deservedly gained the title “the first official photographer of the Mexican cultural patrimony.” Finally, the



photographic work of Kahlo was an effort to register the inheritance of Mexican architecture by means of the photographic expedition, while trying to show the results to a wide audience.<sup>21</sup>

As has already been established, photography allowed many of its pioneers to earn a living, working with the heavy equipment on their backs, photographing not only artistic properties but also popular scenes or picturesque corners — in sum, custom related radiographies of that particular time so that nothing would be lost. As a matter of fact, this new technique of representation was originally linked to a strong documentary value. So, for example, the Mission Héliographique, started in 1851 by the Commission des Monuments Historiques from France, was the first serious and exhaustive example of a clear attempt to create photographic archives, and to document the state of all the French buildings and monuments, which opened the possibility of specific restoration programs according to status as documented in photographs.<sup>22</sup> Another paradigmatic case, partly similar to Kahlo's, was Eugène Atget's efforts beginning at the end of the nineteenth century in Paris (Figure 5). Between 1897 and 1927 Atget took thousands of pictures documenting the palaces, narrow streets, bridges, parks, window-shops, façade details, interiors, markets, warehouses, street vendors, thus creating a gigantic and infinite archive of the city.<sup>23</sup> Charles Baudelaire had already referred to this procedure

that enriches quickly the traveler's album and returns to the eyes the precision that their memories may miss; they will be the secretary and the notebook of anyone that may need in their profession an absolutely material precision.<sup>24</sup>

Kahlo was not exclusively a state-commissioned photographer of architectural patrimony. Around 1909, Carlos Prieto, owner of the Compañía Fundidora de Fierro y Acero de Monterrey, S.A., commissioned him to capture the modern steel structures built of the company, along with the company's operations.<sup>25</sup> Together with those commissioned by the government, all the photographs offer a panorama not only trying to collect the Mexican patrimony, but, more importantly, trying to offer a positive view of the whole nation, according to the modern aspirations of the government.<sup>26</sup>

Jump forward to July 1932, when Guillermo Kahlo took the first set of images of the studio-houses of Rivera and Kahlo, along with the small photographic pavilion created for him. Seven pictures in total, they differ little technically from his earlier images of Mexican churches (Figure 6). The framing is similar, and the intention is also clear: to present the most information, objectively, by precisely selecting the camera



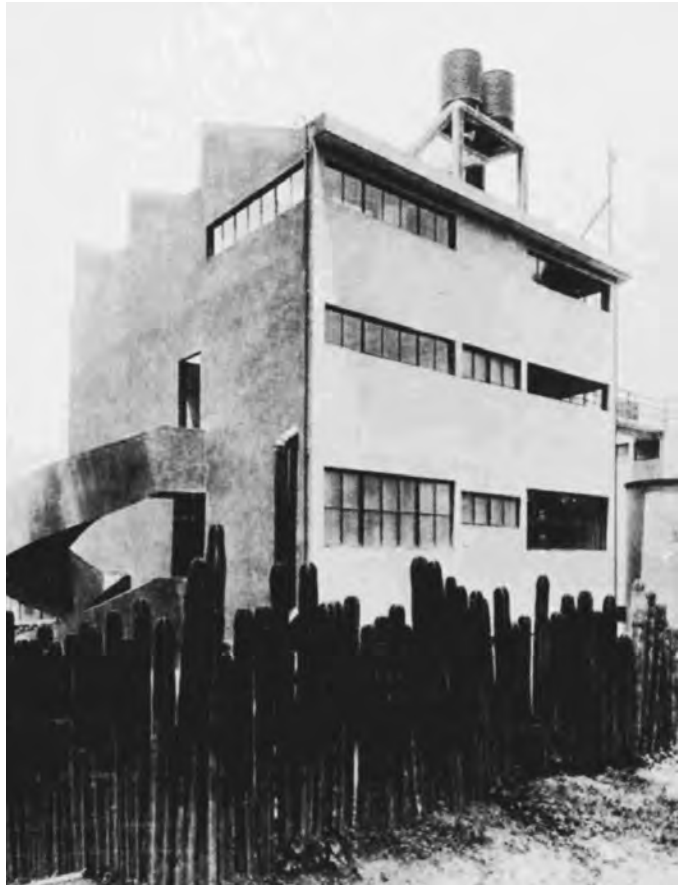
5. Eugène Atget, *Place Saint-André-des-Arts*, 1898.

position and using lighting contrasts to line up and clearly establish the shapes. Considered this way, the photographs are documents of a constructed event. In that manner, they operate in a similar manner to the earlier work, attempting to convey an idealized image of the modern and industrialized nation.

We can also identify other nuances. We pointed out that the studio-houses for Rivera and Kahlo are frequently compared with the *Maison Ozenfant* by Le Corbusier (Paris, 1923). In the drawings of the Swiss architect, or in the photographs of Ozenfant's interiors, we can see, for example, that the window appears without any physical barriers. As W. Curtis pointed out, the studio of Ozenfant was a limpid sanctuary dedicated to the purist spirit of *L'Esprit Nouveau*.<sup>27</sup> Viewed simply, something similar could be said about the stained-glass façade of the Rivera Studio that we know from Kahlo's photographs, or about its interior lit with sawtooth lamps (Figure 7).

Nevertheless, in Rivera's studio there existed certain spaces reserved for privacy, for seeing without being seen. There was still room for introspection in the form of an interior sight, veiled from the outside, that can only see the exterior diffused, as suggested in his 1954 painting *El estudio del pintor*. The painting of Rivera condenses and explains most of the different atmospheres in the studio of the painter. In the foreground we can see a woman lying down, half sleep, half awake.

6. House-studio of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo. Photograph by Guillermo Kahlo.



Around her we can see idols, Judas, and other art objects from the pre-Columbian period filling the space. The curtains of the lower part of the window allow us to see the exterior, imprecisely and diffused, so that it seems to belong to the same interior scene in which ghostlike figures hang from the ceiling.

From the Rivera Studio, the eye owns the territory and all the surroundings, and so the space is dilated. The gaze reaches all the surroundings in close-ups until it reaches the line of trees. Or, farther away and higher up, reaching toward the sky, or down toward the earth, where we can see a private territory, a piece of garden that is added to the room. The relative position of the houses in the land conforms to this other outside room, the one enclosed by the cactus, like the fences of the popular houses and the lines of trees formed in the central valleys of Oaxaca.<sup>28</sup>

In the aseptic images of the studio of Ozenfant, the light fills all spaces and the presence of any trace—not only of domestic but even of artistic activity—is minimized.<sup>29</sup> By contrast, Rivera and Kahlo—who were compulsive collectors of indigenous art (e.g., old gods and figures, carved jade masks, jewels, obsidian objects, stone, clay, ceramic, semi-precious stones) inhabited a setting closer to the surreal. The



7. House-studio of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo. Photograph by Guillermo Kahlo.

domestic items, the furnishings, all of them attempt to recreate an atmosphere similar to a museum but also very close to a theater.

Many of the photographs, the ones in which the couple is portrayed in their homes, or this painting by Rivera, show us how all these spaces were inhabited intensely. However, curiously, as we have stated before, there were scarcely continuous periods in which both Frida and he lived in the houses. Once they were finished, the couple barely occupied them for a year. Frida spent most of her life living in the family house, the Casa Azul in Coyoacán.<sup>30</sup> These facts are material evidence, just as valid as the Kahlo photographs, and they also document the “original state” of the houses, an “original state” other

than the strictly architectonic one. The same use of photography that allows us to document those spaces also permits us to follow their transformation, another aspect that must be weighed in the restoring the space. Together, the photographic record permits an “emotional re-creation of the architecture,” of equal credence as their documentary value for the conservation and restoration.<sup>31</sup>

As John Tagg writes, we have to consider that “every photograph is the result of specific and, and in every sense, significant distortions which render its relation to any prior reality deeply problematic,” raising the “question of the determining level of the material apparatus and the social practices within which photography” occurs. Tagg concludes that the “indexical nature of the photograph” is “highly complex, irreversible, and can guarantee nothing at the level of meaning.”<sup>32</sup> In this sense, photography itself becomes another reality, and for that same reason needs its own history. Therefore, experience and reality should not be separated. The evaluation of the interior, transformed by its inhabitants, is a crucial history and in our opinion absolutely necessary for reconstruction, and which the methodological procedure used by Víctor Jiménez ignored the value of. Even though we may narrow our critical approach, paradoxically we have no other option but to work with the material we have: the photographs.<sup>33</sup>

### **Other Snapshots**

The international reception of modernist Mexican aesthetics, and in some sense an explanation to the identity of the works of O’Gorman, came with the 1937 publication of *The New Architecture in Mexico*, by Esther Born (1902–1987) an American architect and photographer.<sup>34</sup> Again, we find ourselves with a documentary work similar to that of Guillermo Kahlo. Esther and Ernest Born, both architects, traveled through Mexico in 1936. Esther shot nearly three hundred photographs of modern Mexican architecture. She also photographed vernacular architecture, sculpture, paintings, and popular art. Until then, the travel guides for tourists, especially American ones, had established a myth of a picturesque country with a strong heritage of Indian and Spanish culture.<sup>35</sup> Born’s book, by contrast, discovered and emphasized through the works of several Mexican architects—O’Gorman was the first on the list—the strong social compromise of the new Mexican architecture.<sup>36</sup> The book’s introduction made clear the role of photography in the project: “the point of view is familiar, but the accent is different.” In this way, the book mixes photographs and blueprints of the most modern works in the Mexican architecture, with others of vernacular houses, popular markets, bullfights, and, in its final pages, popular handicrafts.



8. Interior and exterior view of the house of Julio Castellanos, Distrito Federal, Mexico. Juan O’Gorman, architect, 1935 and 1937. Photograph by Esther Born. Courtesy of Maxwell Levinson Funds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal.

Maybe the nuances regarding the international tendencies that we have referred to before are obvious in the studio-house of the painter Julio Castellanos, which O’Gorman also designed in 1934. In the photograph of the workspace published in Born’s book, we can see the same neat care of space that we see in the Maison Ozenfant, but we can notice more clearly the presence and traces of the inhabitants. Castellanos affirmed: “Looking has its limits. What we saw, I saw with my heart.” In his work desk, which dominates the space, the inkpot, the papers, and the notebooks are organized and ready for the work. The window and the curtains, half closed, transmit the idea of a certain reserve. The exterior of the Castellanos studio-house in Born’s photographs, nevertheless exhibit the same modern constants: a strongly defined volume, partially elevated over the *pilotis*, and a wide extension of the glass window for the workshop (Figure 8).

The same event happens in the interiors of the twin studio-houses for the American collector and anthropologist Frances Toor, also built in 1934. While the floors, the programs, and the construction solutions follow the line of other earlier O’Gorman works, Born’s photograph of the interior shows a familiarity and the daily life of the space. In a canonically modern background, a different accent is put by the chest, jars, pre-Columbian figures, cushions, the hemp chair, and the traditional handcrafted carpet (Figure 9).

And exactly the same happens with dozens of photographs taken by Nickolas Muray, Edward Weston, or Gisèle Freund, among others, in which we see Frida in the entrance of the house or on top of the terrace, or both spouses embracing each other with gas masks in their hands, afterwards kissing, or meeting the Committee of the Communist Party, or



9. House for Frances Toor, Juan O’Gorman, architect, 1934. Photograph by Esther Born. Courtesy of Maxwell Levinson Funds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal.

Paulette Goddard posing for Rivera in a studio full of objects. The spaces could be more-or-less empty of objects; they could also hold a collection of these that are an extension of the lifestyle of their inhabitants. The objects may soften the roughness of the house, adjusting the scale, creating a favorable environment. Domestic objects, drawers, closets, or other useful or useless objects, reproduced or originals, that have some intimate and personal character. Or objects that

are part of the museum, impregnated by the artistic condition of its creator.<sup>37</sup> Belongings that have had their significance altered by their proximity or by their position, and change constantly with time and that can also be objects of an analysis.

The Riveras enjoyed being photographed. And all those photographs, as well as those of Kahlo, also document their houses, the space, the materials, the furnishings, but, overall, they translate several different intense everyday moments. They are frozen instants that also allow us to come closer to “the documentary” rather than a retrospective photographic realism.

In the same sense, we can argue about the importance of documenting the “living history” of the structure after Diego and Frida, that is, from 1957 until 1995. However, we could also argue that Ruth Rivera, Guadalupe Rivera Marín, or Rafael Coronel cannot be considered as the principal characters of this history. The three inherited the houses that had been conceived and even supervised since the beginning by Diego and Frida.<sup>38</sup> And it was precisely in this period that the houses suffered the alterations that, to some extent, made their later restoration necessary.

### **Conclusion**

The reconstruction of the studio-houses of Rivera and Kahlo began in 1995 and was based principally in the existing photographic documents. This documentary value, typical of the dawn of the photographic age, was a product of Guillermo Kahlo’s experience and skill. Along with these rigorous photographs, similar to those from other architectural models that the house is compared to, are also many photographs that are also documentary in value, but documentary in another sense: this time capturing the experience of the building’s inhabitants.

However, the faithful recuperation of the “original state” of the building, without a doubt, did not take into serious consideration the life experiences of the inhabitants and thus did not consider fundamental aspects of the structure’s continual transformation. Ironically that is a history, as stated above, that was also documented in photographs. The first issue this question raises in the debate—and not a debate exclusive to the restoration of architecture—considers the value of the photograph and the power of its representation.

The photographic expeditions of Kahlo objectively document the architecture; those of Born even capture and value dissonant nuances. Dozens of existing photographs taken by other photographers portray their daily life. Finally, the principal use of the photography for the reconstruction raises the following questions: what is the object that we restore? The



architectural work? And which work, from all those possible across its history? Or, to the contrary, are we not just restoring the photograph itself? And how do we classify the photographs? Is it enough to faithfully reconstruct the architectonic space using only the “documentary” photographs? Or does the reconstruction also make sense from the context and objects that appear in many other images? And if this is the case, how do we transmit the intensity of a specific space and the modifications that it underwent through the traces of its inhabitants?

To conclude, it is indeed a paradox that Diego and Frida only learned the final shape of the construction of their recently completed houses while they were in United States, thanks to the photographs that now have aided the houses to be restored to that state: that is, the very same 1932 photographs by Guillermo Kahlo.

#### Author Biography

Jorge Tárrago Mingo received his professional degree from the University of Navarre’s School of Architecture (ETSAUN) in 2000 and his PhD in 2008. His dissertation, “Habitat la inspiración/construir el mito. Casas-taller de artistas en el periodo de entreguerras,” on artist’s studio-houses between the wars was recently published and awarded the Prix ICAR-CORA 2007 by the International Council for Architectural Research as the best European doctoral thesis on architecture. He has received grants from the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum and the BBK Foundation in 2006. He is an assistant professor at the University of Navarre and is the editor of *Ra, Revista de Arquitectura*.

#### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Víctor Jiménez, *Las casas de Juan O’Gorman para Frida Kahlo y Diego Rivera* (Madrid: Ministerio de Fomento, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Liliana Palaia Perez and José Ignacio Casar Pinazo, “Representación, estudio y conocimiento de los monumentos” *Papeles del Patal: Revista de Restauración Monumental* 3 (2006): 5.

<sup>4</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Notes on Photography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981), 76, 87.

<sup>5</sup> See *Pláticas sobre Arquitectura*, paper published by the Sociedad de Arquitectos Mexicanos, Mexico, 1934; Cited in Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, *Juan O’Gorman, Arquitecto y pintor* (Mexico: Instituto de Investigaciones Artísticas, 1982), 39. Compare Rafael López Rangel, *La modernidad arquitectónica mexicana: Antecedentes y vanguardias, 1900–1940* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1989), 221–26.

<sup>6</sup> See Víctor Jiménez, Juan O’Gorman, *Principio y fin del camino* (Mexico: Círculo de Arte, Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1997), 20; compare A. Luna Arroyo and Juan O’Gorman, *Autobiografía, antología, juicios críticos y documentación exhaustiva de su obra* (Mexico: Cuadernos Populares de pintura mexicana moderna, 1973). Nearly all the studies written about the works of O’Gorman mention the Maison Ozenfant as the principal source for the design of the studio-houses to, secondly, point out the differences.

<sup>7</sup> E. Browne, *Otra Arquitectura en América Latina* (Mexico: Gustavo Gili, 1988), 29; Max Cetto, *Arquitectura Moderna en México* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961); Clive B. Smith, *Builders in the Sun: Five Mexican Architects* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing, 1967).

<sup>8</sup> Compare Jorge F. Liernur, “Nacionalismo y Universalidad en la Arquitectura Latinoamericana” and “Un nuevo mundo para el espíritu nuevo: los descubrimientos de América Latina por la cultura arquitectónica del siglo XX,” in *Escritos de Arquitectura del siglo XX en América Latina* (Madrid: Tanais, 2002), 19–53. See William J. R. Curtis, “Lo general y lo local” in *Modernidad y Arquitectura en México* (Mexico: Gustavo Gili, 1998), 117–20.

<sup>9</sup> See note 13.

<sup>10</sup> See Alicia Azuela, *Diego Rivera en Detroit* (Mexico: Dirección General de Publicaciones, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1985).

<sup>11</sup> See Hayden Herrera, *Frida: una biografía de Frida Kahlo* (Mexico: Editorial Diana, 2003), 20, 205, 233, 240, 248, 252.

<sup>12</sup> His daughter Ruth Rivera would finish his work after his death. See R. López Rangel, *Diego Rivera y la arquitectura mexicana* (Mexico: Dirección General de Publicaciones y Medios, 1986), 34–38.

<sup>13</sup> See [www.bellasartes.gob.mx](http://www.bellasartes.gob.mx). With the new inauguration after the restoration work in February 1998, the houses have had great repercussions in architecture publications throughout the world and in all those the works of Rivera and, above all, those of Kahlo deserved all the attention of the media. Most of the renewed interest in the houses is because of the interest of Japanese architect Toyo Ito. In 1998, Ito organized an exposition on the complete works of O’Gorman held in the Watari Museum in Tokyo. Toyo Ito was also the commissioner of the traveling exposition about the houses and their restoration, which took place, for example, in the Arquerías of the Nuevos Ministerios in Madrid in 1999. See Víctor Jiménez, “Los estudios de Juan O’Gorman para Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo” *Arquine* 1 (1997): 46–57; Toyo Ito, “House for Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera: Juan O’Gorman’s Architecture and Mexican Modern” *Space Design* 5 (1998): 57–92; Toyo Ito, “Toyo Ito Discovers Juan O’Gorman,” *Arquine* 10 (1999–2000): 10; Luis E. Carranza, “La casa-studio per Diego Rivera e Frida Kahlo” *Casabella* 82/83 (2001): 8–21.

<sup>14</sup> Víctor Jiménez, *Las casas de Juan O’Gorman para Frida Kahlo y Diego Rivera* (Madrid: Ministerio de Fomento, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> See Gaby Franger and Rainer Huhle, *Fridas Vater: der Fotograf Guillermo Kahlo; von Pforzheim bis México* (Munich: Schirmel Mosel, 2005); Herrera, *Frida*, 21–23.

<sup>18</sup> Sergio Sánchez Hernández, *Fuentes para el estudio de Gerardo Murillo, Dr. Atl* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Dirección General de Publicaciones, 1994).

<sup>19</sup> Manuel Toussaint: *Su proyección en la historia del arte mexicano* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> *Iglesias de México*, 6 volumes (Mexico: Publicaciones de la Secretaría de Hacienda, 1924–1927).

<sup>21</sup> “In the general archive of national goods, the notorious work that an artist commissioned for the Government of the Republic 25 years ago was kept for a long time, nearly forgotten, only to be seen by a small number of the privileged.” *Ibid.*, 1:2.

<sup>22</sup> See Philippe Néagu, *La Mission Héliographique: photographies de 1851* (Paris: Inspection générale des musées classés et contrôlés, 1980); and the chapter, “La fotografía documental,” in Gabriel Bauret, *De la fotografía* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca de la mirada, ed. La Marca, 1999) 27–29.

<sup>23</sup> See Eugène Atget, *1857–1927: Paris* (Cologne: Taschen, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Charles Baudelaire, “El público moderno y la fotografía: Salón de 1859,” in *Salones y otros escritos sobre arte* (Madrid: Visor, 1996), 233.

<sup>25</sup> A recent exposition, *Guillermo Kahlo: De oficio fotógrafo* (March–April 2007) in the Museo Nacional de San Carlos, Mexico, D.F., collected dozens of photographs.

<sup>26</sup> To better understand the environment of those times, we can consult Enrique X. de Anda Alanis, *La Arquitectura de la revolución mexicana: Corrientes y estilos en las décadas de los veinte* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1990); Enrique X. de Anda Alanis, ed., *Ciudad de México, Arquitectura 1921–1970* (Seville, Spain: Consejería de Obras Públicas y Transportes, 2001).

<sup>27</sup> William Curtis, *Le Corbusier: Ideas and Forms* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1986).

<sup>28</sup> Francisco Javier López Morales, *Arquitectura vernácula en México* (Mexico: Ed. Trillas, 1987) 145–53.

<sup>29</sup> See Dan Naegele, “Object, Image, Aura: Le Corbusier and the Architecture of Photography,” *Ra, Revista de Arquitectura* 4 (2000): 49–56.

<sup>30</sup> Herrera, *Frida*, 20, 205, 233, 240, 248, 252.

<sup>31</sup> For some keys regarding the relation between photography and the power of representation of the architectonic preservation, it is interesting to look into Ignacio G. Varas Ibáñez, “La representación del monumento en el siglo XIX: Tiempo, lugar y memoria ante las transformaciones de la representación gráfica de la imagen monumental,” *Papeles del Patal: Revista de restauración monumental* 3 (2006): 49–70.

<sup>32</sup> John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 8–9.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>34</sup> Esther Born, *The New Architecture in Mexico* (New York: The Architectural Record, William Morrow and Company, 1937).

<sup>35</sup> Among the most important of these American guides are Carleton Beals, *Mexican Maze* (New York: J. B. Lippincot, 1933); Stuart Chase, *Mexico* (New York: MacMillan, 1935); Frances Toor, *Frances Toor's Guide to Mexico* (Mexico: A. Mijares y hno., 1933); Anita Brenner, *Your Mexican Holiday* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1932).

<sup>36</sup> See Beach Riley, "Social Progress and the New Architecture," in *The New Architecture in Mexico*, by Esther Born, 18–20. The intentions of the book, not strictly architectonic like others on Latin American architecture edited in the United States just before the First World War, have been studied in J. F. Liernur "The South American Way: el 'milagro' brasileño, los Estados Unidos y la Segunda Guerra Mundial (1939–1943)," *Block 4* (December 1999): 30.

<sup>37</sup> Compare José Ramón Sierra Delgado, *Sobre el destino poético de los objetos cotidianos: en la casa del artista no adolescente no habita el diseño* (Barcelona: Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona, 1996).

<sup>38</sup> In July 1931, Rivera returned to Mexico for a short time, and Juan O'Gorman showed him several blueprints and drawings, which the painter approved. See Juan Coronel Rivera, "Del sol y la luna: Un día en la vida de Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo," in Jiménez, *Las casas de Juan O'Gorman para Frida Kahlo y Diego Rivera*, 33. The known history of the details of the commission of the houses can be consulted in Antonio Luna Arroyo and Juan O'Gorman, *Autobiografía, antología, juicios críticos y documentación exhaustiva de su obra* (Mexico: Cuadernos Populares de pintura mexicana moderna, 1973), 102.