



Juan O'Gorman: A Confluence of Civilizations

Catherine Nixon Cooke

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To create the *Confluence of Civilizations in the Americas* mural commissioned for the 1968 World's Fair in San Antonio, Texas, Juan O'Gorman collected natural stones from all over Mexico—twelve colors in all—field stones that the artist knew would never fade or change their hue. ***Juan O'Gorman: A Confluence of Civilizations*** follows the life of O'Gorman and covers the creation of this spectacular piece of midcentury public art, which stands the test of time not just in vibrancy but as one of the most influential works created by a Mexican artist.

Juan O'Gorman was a not only a painter and a muralist, a mosaic artist, a critic, and a professor; he was also an architect and a revolutionary, possibly most famous for his close friendship with Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo and as the designer of their two-house studio in Mexico City—Casa Azul—linked by a symbolic bridge.

To celebrate San Antonio's HemisFair Exposition in 1968, O'Gorman created the giant mosaic mural that still adorns one wall of the Lila Cockrell Theater along San Antonio's famed River Walk. The five-ton mosaic measured 2,600 square feet and consisted of 540 numbered panels, each weighing about 90 pounds.

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