

**ARTURO GARCÍA BUSTOS:** *Arturo García Bustos was first known as a printmaker, and later as a painter and muralist. However, his early studies were in painting, and it was from these that his graphic works emerged. He has achieved prominence in all three disciplines.*

Arturo García Bustos was born in Mexico City on August 8, 1926. After his mother's death, when García Bustos was two years old, his aunt Teresita took care of him. Encouraged by his aunt and family, Arturo García Bustos appreciated diverse art forms. His first drawing classes were taken with a well-known landscape painter Armando García Nuñez. In the 1940s he took classes at La Academia de San Carlos. By 1943, García Bustos had registered at La Escuela de Pintura y Escultura de la Esmeralda (The Esmeralda School of Painting and Sculpture). Its founders included many European refugees; the surrealist Benjamín Peret taught French; other teachers included Jesús Guerrero Galván, José Chavez Morado, Frida Kahlo, Alfredo Zalce, Carlos Orozco Romero, María Izquierdo, and Agustín Lazo.

After beginning his studies with Agustín Lazo, García Bustos continued to study with Frida Kahlo. He recalls that Kahlo "dazzled with her style of dress, her happiness, youth and wisdom and, above all, her willingness to share her knowledge of painting and humanism, in spite of her shattered health." In 1925 she had been badly injured in a traffic accident. Her health was permanently damaged and as the years passed, she grew progressively weaker. Eventually, she had to stop teaching at La Esmeralda but she then invited her pupils to take classes in the garden of her Coyoacán home. This dramatic change was fascinating for García Bustos and her other students -- Guillermo Monroy, Arturo Estrada, and Fanny Rabel, whose nickname, as a group, became 'Los Fridos'. "We enjoyed the openness of the garden, the landscape of El Pedregal and the advice and guidance of Rivera, who many times observed our work; we also were able to observe Frida Kahlo's paintings in progress and the artistic ambiance of the Casa Azul (Blue House)," García Bustos remembers.

In 1943, under the direction of Kahlo, García Bustos and other "Los Fridos" artists painted two of their first murals; one was located on the façade of "La Rosita," a pulque store and the other in a public laundry in Coyoacán ("los lavaderos públicos"). For García Bustos the latter project was very important because Kahlo "put them in contact with the most humble groups of Mexico. Frida was always worried about helping those most in need," he said.

At the end of 1945 (while still taking classes with Frida Kahlo) García Bustos and other young artists founded the Jóvenes Artistas Revolucionarios (Young Revolutionary Artists). Members included Pedro Coronel, Alberto Beltrán and those that had collectively been termed "Los Fridos."

Mural painting has been a life-long passion with García Bustos. In addition to the murals that he painted under the direction of Frida Kahlo, he painted others in cooperation with his wife, Rina Lazo, and still others on his own. In 1964, architect Pedro Ramirez Velasquez asked him to paint the *Sala de Etnografía de Oaxaca* as one of the principal murals at the National Museum of Anthropology and History. García Bustos also painted the central stairway of the *Palacio de Gobierno* in Oaxaca, portraying the history of Mexico and Oaxaca. The mural was inaugurated in November of 1980. García Bustos would paint a second mural here, *Cosmogonía de los Pueblos Indígenas de Oaxaca*, in 1986. In 1989, a mural was commissioned for the University Metro station: *La Universidad en el Umbral del Siglo XXI* (The University in the shadow of the 21st Century), and in 1999, he completed a mural at Glaxo Wellcome Laboratories, which includes portraits of Nobel laureates James Watson and Francis Crick, for their work in genetics.

*El Arte de la Nueva Clase* (The Art of the New Class) is the title of the speech given when he was inducted into the Academy of Arts. He expresses his good fortune and appreciation for having worked closely with and learned from "great spirits of humanity such as José Clemente Orozco, Pablo Neruda, and Frida Kahlo."

*Excerpted from Graphic Witness*