

REVA BROOKS

Reva Brooks was a brilliant Canadian photographer who crossed artistic gazes with the fiery Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros in the late 1940s. Reva Brooks and her painter-musician husband, Leonard Brooks, began their love affair with Mexico in 1947 when they moved to the warmth of San Miguel de Allende from the artistic chill of Canada. Siqueiros arrived in San Miguel in 1948 and plunged the Brooks' and that little colonial town into controversy and artistic ferment. The Brooks' and other teachers were subjected to a dramatic deportation at gunpoint a year after Siqueiros and his students boycotted and closed the art school.

By this time Reva Brooks had mastered dark-room and photographic techniques and had taken the most famous photograph of her career, the image of a dead child and its grieving mother. This image would rocket her to prominence in Mexico, the U.S.A. and Europe. Edward Steichen bought this photograph for the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1952 and included 'Confrontation', Elodia (the grieving mother), in the "Family of Man" exhibition in 1955. In 1975 the San Francisco Museum of Art chose Reva Brooks to be one of fifty women in the exhibition "Women of Photography: An Historic Survey".

Reva Brooks' vision was always driven by her burning intellect and compassionate heart. After arriving in Mexico, she quickly learned Spanish and connected directly with the humble Mexicans during her early travels in a jeep across Mexico. Her early photographic successes and the management of Leonard's painting career kept them both at the forefront of a stimulating swirl of artistic activity in Mexico.

Early in the 1960s Reva was involved with Leonard's music students. In the beginning she photographed the poor Mexican children who came for free lessons in the Brooks home. Later she photographed the students of the Fine Arts Center in San Miguel where Leonard founded a music department and taught for twenty years. Included in the music section are portraits of the well-known Daniel Aguascalientes and his brother 'Pepe' who later formed a band with many of his brothers and who can be seen performing on Mexican television as well as touring the U.S.A. and Mexico.