

PORTRAITS OF MEXICO: A PHOTO-ESSAY

A photographer explores Mexico's hopeful future and heavy past.

BY ADRIANA ZEBRAUSKAS



OCTOBER 2007

A vocalist for Banda Unicornio, Julio Cesar Vasquez Rivera, 19, holds his stage costume. Rivera, who lives in Guanajuato, a state in central Mexico that has lost many residents to emigration, was planning his first trip to the United States.

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APRIL 2012

Siblings Rosa Maria, 6, Yasmin, 17, Juan Antonio, 1, and Juan Manuel, 14, gather in their temporary home. The Romero-Dias family—a household of nine, headed by a single mother—would soon move into a new residence designed by Tierra Savia. Based in Ciudad Juárez, a city of 1.5 million across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas, Tierra Savia employs Juarezeños living in extreme poverty to build their own eco-friendly houses from dirt.



FEBRUARY 2008

Micaela Rivera, of Villa de Vázquez, outside Mexico City, and her mother borrowed \$3,550 from Compartamos for their homemade-cheese business. Compartamos (“we share” in Spanish) is a commercial microlender that has become one of Mexico’s most profitable banks. Today, its average customer pays a yearly interest rate of about 80 percent.

JUNE 2007

Carlos Slim, a Mexican businessman and perhaps the world's richest person, with a net worth of \$73 billion, poses in his Mexico City gallery amid his private art collection.





SEPTEMBER 2012

Yaihr Castillo García, 8, plays outside his family's home in Ciudad Juárez. His sister, Brenda Berenice, went missing while in a downtown neighborhood. She is one of hundreds of women and girls who have disappeared in the area since 1993. Some bodies have been found, many bearing marks of torture.



JANUARY 2007

Fernando Ramírez Rangel, chef and owner of Maria del Alma, a restaurant in the fashionable Condesa neighborhood in Mexico City, specializes in cuisine from rainforest-covered Tabasco, a southeastern state on the Gulf of Mexico.



APRIL 2012

A model waits backstage at a fashion show organized by Amor por Juárez (Love for Juárez), a group that hopes to revitalize the city through the arts.

APRIL 2013

In Culiacán, Sinaloa, a city on the Gulf of California notorious for drug-related violence, women dance in a cemetery during a birthday party for a man who died the year before, at age 35.



ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS is a freelance photojournalist from Brazil. Based in Mexico City for the past nine years, she contributes regularly to *The New York Times*, and her work has also appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Sunday Times*, *Sunday Telegraph*, *Glamour Magazine*, *The Guardian*, and *Paris Match*. She is an instructor for Foundry Photojournalism Workshops, which holds photojournalism courses in developing nations.