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Wednesday, September 18, 2013

Negocios

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Mexican Standard Bearers, 10 Reasons to be Proud

From Olympic medalists to talented personalities, Mexico has, at the very least, ten reasons to be proud. This article pays tribute to the Mexicans responsible for positioning the country's name way up high in the international sphere.

Mexico's international standing is the reflection of what many Mexicans are achieving on the global arena, with the country taking some of the credit

whenever they succeed. This article is dedicated to the scientists, architects, athletes, social activists and other personalities who work tirelessly to raise the Mexican flag higher.

MMX

Since the ancient world and as the millennium progressed, architecture grew more ostentatious, taxing whole regions' natural resources to the point of depletion.

MMX is a research studio that attempts to rebalance the ecological scales by exploring relationships between the environment, possible interventions and the content of the latter, under the premise that these three factors act as a whole and cannot be approached separately.

Founded in 2009 by Jorge Arvizu, Ignacio del Río, Emmanuel Ramírez and Diego Ricalde, MMX's focus on design processes for territories of different scales –from product design and installations to architecture and planning– has earned the firm recognition at home and abroad. This year, MMX won the Architectural League Prize for Young Architects+Designers, one of the most prestigious architecture awards in the US.

Rafael Navarro González

Mexico can lay claim to at least two of the world's most prestigious scientific institutions: the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN) and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), which produce scientists on a par with those educated in developed countries.



B2B
Business to Business



A graduate of the UNAM, Navarro González is a researcher at his alma mater's Nuclear Sciences Institute currently involved in the search for life on Mars, which is part of a NASA mission.

Acting as a scientific consultant, Navarro interprets the results sent back to Earth by Curiosity, a roving robot the size of an SUV that collects samples of organic compounds from Mars and that is equipped with a state-of-the-art lab: the Sample Analysis at Mars (SAM) instrument suite.

As a recipient of the Alexander von Humboldt Medal, awarded to Navarro González by the European Geosciences Union for outstanding achievements in the discovery of Mars-like soils in the Atacama Desert in northern Chile, and the TWAS Prize in Earth Sciences, awarded by the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World, there's no Mexican better suited for the job.

Susana López Charretón

The under-five mortality rate is a development indicator that has gradually declined worldwide since the 1970s as a result of advances in science, nonetheless the rotavirus disease is still the second leading cause of death among children, claiming 450,000 lives per year.

Another major contributor to the eradication of the disease is Susana López Charretón, a Mexican scientist whose work was acknowledged this year by L'Oréal and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Since 1986, López Charretón has conducted valuable research into rotavirus disease at the Biotechnology Institute of the UNAM. The third Mexican scientist to receive the L'Oréal-UNESCO "For Women in Science" Award, this is but another in a long list of accolades that include the 1994 National Science Award, the 2001 UNESCO Carlos J. Finlay Prize for Microbiology and the 2004 UNAM Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Medal.

Gracia Studio

Founded by Mexican architects Jorge and Javier Gracia in San Diego, California, in 2005, Gracia Studio's philosophy is to build homes that deserve to be lived in, a premise that has resulted in a great deal of research into construction materials that are both functional and aesthetic.

The Endémico Resguardo Silvestre Hotel, one of their most famous creations that won the 2012 Travel+Leisure Awards in the "Best Small Hotel" category, amply illustrates the fruits of the firm's research.

"Luxury camping" is the underlying concept of this boutique hotel, which boasts a swimming pool, winery and restaurant.

Its 20 finely-appointed cabins are spread over 400,000 square meters of rugged Baja wine country and are built on stilts to reduce environmental impact. Guests can relax on their own private terrace knowing that not a single rock of the mountainous landscape of Valle de Guadalupe was disturbed in the making of this small but unique hotel.

Miquel Adrià

Architecture is one of the fields that best represent Mexico abroad. From the great pyramids of Mesoamerica and the monumental buildings of New Spain to the functionalism of Mario Pani and the modernism of 1980 Pritzker prizewinner Luis Barragán, Mexico has a long-standing and varied tradition of avant-garde architecture, which has been carried on by Miquel Adrià.

Born in Catalonia, Spain, but Mexican by choice, Adrià is the founder of Arquine, the first specialized architecture journal published in Mexico. More than a magazine, the project has come to be a vehicle for the promotion of architecture via congresses, awards and even a postgraduate course at the Iberoamericana University (UIA).

This year, Adrià was appointed curator of the Mexican Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale. This is the first time Mexico has had its very own permanent pavilion at the Biennale, which showcases The Collectivity of Cultural Space/Culture Under Construction, an exhibition that brings together 13 projects by acclaimed contemporary Mexican architects such as Teodoro

González de León, Enrique Norton, Alberto Kalach, Bernardo Gómez-Pimienta, Mauricio Rocha and Tatiana Bilbao.

Cuauhtémoc Medina

Cuauhtémoc Medina is a Mexican art critic, historian and curator. Appointed the first associate curator of Latin American Art Collections by London's Tate Gallery, a post he held from 2002 to 2008, Medina served as director of the 7th International Symposium on Contemporary Art Theory in Mexico, is a founding member of Teratoma—a group of curators, critics and anthropologists—and author of Ojo Breve, an art criticism column he writes for the Mexican daily Reforma.

This year, he will be acting as curator of the itinerant European biennial Manifesta 9, one of the world's most prestigious contemporary art events to take place in Limburg, Belgium, from June 2 to September 30.

Michel Franco

The Mexican film Después de Lucía (After Lucía) won over the jury of the "Un Certain Regard" section of this year's Cannes Film Festival and it is precisely his "subjective view" of life that has brought writer-director Michel Franco international fame.

A view Franco shares with the spectator through his films. Like his first feature, Daniel y Ana (Daniel and Ana), which made its debut at Cannes in 2009, the harsh realism of After Lucía is pared down to the bare essentials. A gripping story from a director who understands that sometimes greater depth of emotion lies in what is left unsaid.

Okurrenzia

This firm lends equal importance to every design element, from the intended function, aesthetic features and user experience of a product to the materials and technologies in its manufacture. The end result is an entirely new object that blends in with the world to perfection, a product that relates to people, a creation in the true sense of the word, one that leaves an impression of eternal existence.

One example will suffice: Circulight, a circular energy-saving lamp whose origin may have never been questioned. That's right. Circulight is Mexican designed, engineered and made by Okurrenzia.

Espolea

HIV/AIDS constitutes one of the greatest public health threats to modern society, with 34 million carriers worldwide, most of whom live in developing countries.

Although researchers have developed a drug cocktail that extends HIV/AIDS's patients life expectancy and helps improve their quality of life, education remains the best weapon against the disease.

One group of volunteers that declared war on the disease is Espolea, winner of this year's United Nations (UN) Red Ribbon Award for HIV/AIDS prevention. Advocates of "fair, inclusive societies whose young people can express themselves, make decisions, exercise their rights and do their bit to change the world," Yunuén Flores Tamayo, Yahir Zavaleta and Aram Barra are also active in the areas of gender relations, drug policy and damage reduction, proving that young people are the country's most valuable resource when it comes to making a difference.

Mexican Medal-winners at the 2012 Olympics in London

Until the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Mexico had never won a medal in archery. Aída Román and Mariana Avitia changed history winning silver and bronze respectively and allowing Mexico to tick off not one but two boxes on its medal table. Román had previously hit the mark at the 2007 Pan- American Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she won the silver medal, and at the 2010 Central American and Caribbean Games in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, where she bagged seven golds and one silver.

Conversely, Mexico has a history of Olympic victories in diving. Germán Sánchez and Iván García

returned from the London Games with the silver medal on the synchronized 10 m platform after executing a seemingly impossible dive. Teamwork has paid off for these young athletes, who have garnered two gold medals since 2010.

Mexico's female athletes also excelled in the sport, with Paola Espinosa and Alejandra Orozco winning silver on the synchronized 10 m platform and Laura Sánchez leaping to bronze on the individual 3 m springboard.

After winning gold at the 2008 Games in Beijing, China, María del Rosario Espinoza was presented with a bronze medal in Tae Kwon Do at this year's games.

But the highlight was indubitably the Mexican soccer team, which won a well earned gold.

It seems Mexico has learned from past experience and put its resources to the best possible use, achieving tangible results. And the more medals athletes bring home in international competitions, the more young people are motivated to participate in sports on a competitive level in a bid to emulate their Olympic heroes.

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