



Photographic: The Life of Graciela Iturbide

Isabel Quintero

Zeke Peña

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Isabel Quintero and Zeke Peña illuminate the career of a noted photographer in their biographical graphic novel *Photographic: The Life of Graciela Iturbide*.

Published by the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, *Photographic* might herald a new opportunity for graphic novels—placement in museum gift shops. The use of a visual storytelling medium to capture the critical influences and events of a visual artist's life and career seems natural and allows for a less time-consuming, but perhaps no less effective, introduction than a traditional all-text biography.

Quintero uses a first-person narrative, from the perspective of Iturbide, during the book's pictorial storytelling, switching to third person for occasional text overview pages that help divide the book into different scenes or time periods. While Quintero's writing veers from the surreal to the objective throughout the book, this seems the only way to fully capture Iturbide's life and art simultaneously. Iturbide was consulted during the creation of the book, and Quintero skillfully channels the photographer's distinctive artistic sensibility into written form, aided by Peña's illustrations.

The biggest question in creating a graphic novel about a photographer might be how to use the artist's photographs themselves, if at all. It would have been injudicious to produce a biography without Iturbide's memorable photos of a goat-slaughtering ritual in Mexico or her stunning portraits of Mexican natives and landscapes. Quintero and Peña strike a good compromise, featuring many of Iturbide's photographs as a complement to the biography, but without being dependent on them. The result is a book that expertly combines various aspects to become something utterly unique.

PETER DABBENE (March/April 2018)

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