

lilia carrillo

mañana de octubre

nov. 12, 2026

jan. 30, 2027

opening

nov. 12, 6 – 8 pm

kurimanzutto
gob. rafael rebollar 94
col. san miguel chapultepec
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tue – thur, 11am – 6pm
fri & sat, 11am – 4pm

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kurimanzutto New York presents *Lilia Carrillo: Mañana de octubre*. The exhibition brings together twenty-five works made between 1948 and 1974 by Lilia Carrillo (Mexico, 1930–1974), tracing her development from early figuration to her explorations of space and material through abstraction, and bringing her distinctive contribution to the movement into sharper focus.

Carrillo stood out as the only woman associated with the Generación de la Ruptura, who during the second half of the 20th century transformed the panorama of modern art in Mexico. Through her sensitivity to paint and sustained experimentation with materials, she developed one of the most distinctive approaches to abstraction.

The exhibition focuses on Carrillo's explorations of abstraction, with two early works tracing her transition from figuration. In *Autorretrato escolar* (School Self-Portrait, 1948), painted while she studied art at the Escuela Nacional de Pintura, Escultura y Grabado "La Esmeralda" in Mexico City, she portrays a young artist already assured in her vocation, at the beginning of a career that would continually test the conventions of her training.

Following her return to Mexico after a few years studying in Paris, she painted *Mudo espío mientras alguien a mí voraz observa* (Wordlessly I Spy While Someone Watches Me Voraciously, 1956) a work that marks an early turn away from figuration and realism toward the nonfigurative language that would increasingly define her work.

By the late 1950s, Carrillo's turn toward abstraction became more pronounced, as seen in *Júbilo neutro* (Neutral Jubilation, 1959). Her developing language drew on forms of abstraction that emerged from Surrealism in Mexico, particularly in the work of Wolfgang Paalen and Alice Rahon. Their understanding of painting encouraged Carrillo's exploration and her approach to painting as an act of risk and discovery.

In 1959, Carrillo traveled with artist Manuel Felguérez to the United States, encountering recent developments in abstraction firsthand, including exhibitions by Helen Frankenthaler and Adolph Gottlieb. These encounters brought Carrillo into closer contact with Abstract Expressionism, while her work also developed in dialogue with European Informalism.

Throughout the 1960s, Carrillo pursued multiple approaches to abstraction, from the open, atmospheric field of *Abstracción* (Abstraction, 1961) to the more materially constructed *Mañana de octubre* (October Morning, 1964), which lends the exhibition its title and exemplifies Carrillo's material experimentation during these years.

Carrillo's practice also extended beyond painting into the experimental theater of the period. Her costume designs connect her work particularly through productions led by Alejandro Jodorowsky. Several seldom-exhibited studies included in the exhibition incorporate drawing, collage, and pieces of fabric, revealing how her interest in textiles moved between the canvas and the stage.

In *Untitled* (1974), made in the year of her death, faint graphite lines and spare passages of color emerge across a largely open field, the painting appears unfinished, although whether Carrillo considered it complete remains unknown. Carrillo died in 1974 at the age of forty-three.

Spanning more than twenty-five years of Carrillo's practice, *Mañana de octubre* builds on a period of significant renewed scholarly and institutional attention to her work. The exhibition follows her major retrospective at the Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City and, more recently, a presentation of her work at Americas Society in New York.

Historical context and publications

A selection of archival materials will be presented alongside the works to further contextualize Carrillo's life and practice.

The exhibition is accompanied by a new publication featuring essays by Daniel Garza Usabiaga and Megan Kincaid. In 2024 kurimanzutto, Mexico City presented the exhibition *Lilia Carrillo's Lilia Carrillos*, which included an illustrated timeline, archive material, and a publication.

About the artist

Lilia Carrillo (Mexico City, 1930–1974) artistic career transcended the traditional limits of Mexican painting in the second half of the 20th century. Her importance lies not only in her innovative spirit in the field of abstraction, but also in the formal and material experimentation she carried out in various disciplines such as theater. Despite her relatively brief career,

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Carrillo's impact resonates in art history, within a generation of artists dedicated to broadening the horizons of Mexican art beyond the conventional models of figurative representation. Carrillo forged an artistic path in a world still largely dominated by men; her works are a testament to the pioneering spirit that characterized her and the enduring contribution she made to visual expression.

Carrillo studied Visual Arts at the Escuela Nacional de Pintura, Escultura y Grabado "La Esmeralda" in Mexico City. In 1953 she received a scholarship to reside at the Casa de México in Paris, where she enrolled at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. During her stay in Paris, she exhibited for the first time individually at the Casa de México and collectively at the Petit Palais in 1955. Back in Mexico, in 1956, she participated in a joint exhibition with Manuel Felguérez at the Galería Carmel-Art in Mexico City, followed by her first solo exhibition of abstract works at the Galería Antonio Souza in 1957. Carrillo exhibited on multiple occasions at the Galería Juan Martín, in Mexico City, and at important national institutions including the Museo de Arte Moderno and the Casa del Lago. In addition to her career as a painter, she also worked on set designs and costumes for Alejandro Jodorowsky's vanguard theatre productions.

Carrillo won second place in the ESSO Salon in 1965 and participated in 1966 in the group show *Confrontación 66*, at the Palacio de Bellas Artes. She was a founding member of the Independent Salon in 1968. In 1969 she painted the mural *La ciudad desbordada, contaminación del aire*, to be exhibited in the Mexican Pavilion as part of the Osaka 70 World Fair in Japan. Her work traveled to galleries, museums, and biennials in countries such as France, Brazil, United States, Spain, Peru, Cuba and Colombia. From 1971 onwards, Carrillo's pictorial production was affected due to a spinal cord aneurysm that partially paralyzed her. The artist died on June 6, 1974.

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