

Lilia Carrillo
Chronology

kurimanzutto

1930

Lilia Carrillo is born in Mexico City on November 2, the only child of Francisco Carrillo, a general and military aviator, and Socorro García, a writer and intellectual closely connected to Mexico's artistic and literary circles. Artists and writers frequently gather at her mother's home.



Lilia Carrillo with her mother, Socorro García, 1953

1947

Carrillo enrolls at the Escuela Nacional de Pintura, Escultura y Grabado "La Esmeralda." She studies with Manuel Rodríguez Lozano, as well as Agustín Lazo, Antonio Ruiz, and Carlos Orozco Romero.



Mi regazo como el de las mujeres estériles (Homenaje a Rodríguez Lozano), ca. 1950–55

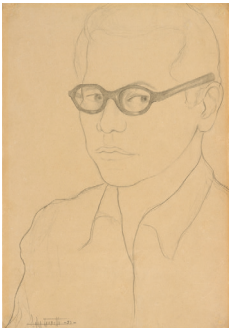
1951

While still a student at La Esmeralda, Carrillo suffers a serious accident when she falls from scaffolding during a mural-painting class at the Ex Convento de San Diego in Mexico City.

Carrillo graduates from La Esmeralda with the title of Maestra en Artes Plásticas.

1952

Carrillo marries philosopher Ricardo Guerra.



Retrato de Ricardo Guerra, 1951

1953

Carrillo's first son, Ricardo Guerra Carrillo, is born.

Carrillo and Ricardo Guerra receive scholarships to reside at the Casa de México in Paris, a residence for Mexican students and scholars. Carrillo enrolls at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, an independent art school.

In Paris, Carrillo encounters European avant-garde painting, an experience that informs her gradual move away from the academic figurative work of her student years.

1954–55

Carrillo meets artist Manuel Felguérez at the Casa de México in Paris, where he is residing on a scholarship to study sculpture. In 1955, she exhibits at the Casa de México and participates in a group exhibition at the Petit Palais.


Exposición de Artes Plásticas en la Casa de México en París

Newspaper clipping on the exhibition at Casa de México in Paris, reproducing Carrillo's *Retrato de Ruth* (1955)

1956

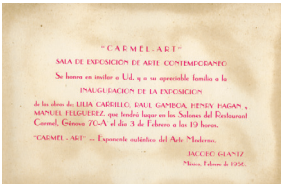
Carrillo returns to Mexico, where her second son, Juan Pablo Guerra Carrillo, is born.



Lilia Carrillo with her sons Ricardo and Juan Pablo Guerra Carrillo, n.d.

She teaches plein-air painting at the Galerías Chapultepec of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes. Her work begins to move more decisively away from figuration.

She also participates in the inaugural exhibition of Galería Carmel-Art in Mexico City, where she presents paintings previously exhibited at the Casa de México in Paris alongside works by Manuel Felguérez and other artists.


"CARMEL-ART"
SALA DE EXPOSICIÓN DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO
Se honra en invitar a Ud. y a su apreciable familia a la
INAUGURACIÓN DE LA EXPOSICIÓN
de las obras de LILIA CARRILLO, RAUL GAMBOA, PENSY HAGAN y MANUEL FELGUEREZ, que tendrá lugar en los Salones del Restaurant Carmel, Génova 70-A el día 3 de Febrero a las 19 horas.
"CARMEL-ART" — Exponente auténtico del Arte Moderno.
JACCEO GANTZ
México, Febrero de 1956.

Invitation for the inaugural exhibition of Galería Carmel-Art, Mexico City, 1956

1957

Carrillo and Felguérez present *Lilia Carrillo: pintura – Felguérez: escultura* at Galería Antonio Souza in Mexico City. For the first time, she exhibits a body of abstract paintings.


Doble Exposición
"Umbral del Crepúsculo," de Lilia Carrillo.
En la Galería de Antonio Souza se inaugurará mañana jueves muy interesante exposición de pinturas de Lilia Carrillo y esculturas de Manuel Felguerez.
Numerosa y selecta concurrencia asistirá, en el local de Génova número 61-2, a esta inauguración. Antonio Souza presenta a los dos notables artistas que expondrán sus obras en su galería con las siguientes palabras:
"La pintura de Lilia Carrillo se presenta a nosotros como una nebulosa descubierta por un astrónomo en los últimos instantes; apenas ha habido tiempo de fijar su masa y sus contornos se pierden en los bordes de luz que ennata este sinfín de estrellas."

Newspaper clipping announcing Lilia Carrillo and Manuel Felguérez's exhibition at Galería Antonio Souza, reproducing Carrillo's *Umbral del Crepúsculo* (Twilight's Threshold), 1957

1958

Carrillo exhibits at the Martin Schweg Gallery in St. Louis, Missouri, in one of her earliest documented presentations in the United States.

1959

Carrillo is selected to represent Mexico at the inaugural Biennale des Jeunes in Paris, an international exhibition established to present the work of artists under the age of thirty-five.

Carrillo and Felguérez present a second two-person exhibition at Galería Antonio Souza in Mexico City.

Later that year, Carrillo and Felguérez travel to the United States, beginning a stay of several months in New York and Washington, D.C. During this period, they encounter recent developments in contemporary art through exhibitions including those of Helen Frankenthaler, Adolph Gottlieb, and Yves Klein.

1960


Felguérez y Lilia Carrillo, a los EE. UU.
Lilia Carrillo y Manuel Felguérez
EN NUESTRO GRAN SORTEO
BODA GARIBI SUSAREY-FLORES
Alicia Sánchez F. es "Asesora" el Sábado

Newspaper clipping announcing the upcoming exhibition by Lilia Carrillo and Manuel Felguérez at the Pan American Union Gallery, Washington, D.C., 1960

While in Washington, Carrillo and Felguérez present a two-person exhibition at the Pan American Union in Washington, D.C., arranged through the mediation of Peruvian artist Fernando de Szyszlo. During their stay, they marry.

Following her return to Mexico, Carrillo's painting moves away from her earlier Surrealist influences toward a more distinctive approach to abstraction.

Carrillo participates in the II Bienal Interamericana de México at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, which gives increased visibility to a younger generation of Mexican artists working outside the dominant muralist tradition.

Carrillo designs costumes for *Margarita Gautier*, an adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' *La dama de las camelias* (The Lady of the Camellias), directed by Lola Puche; Felguérez designs the sets. The production is an early example of Carrillo's sustained theatrical work, often in collaboration with Felguérez.



Lilia Carrillo, *Apunte para vestuario de obra de teatro, mujer vestida de blanco (La lechera)*, 1960

1961

Carrillo begins exhibiting with the newly established Galería Juan Martín in Mexico City, participating in a group exhibition alongside artists including Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo, and Gunther Gerzso.

Carrillo participates in two major international biennials: the VI Bienal de São Paulo, as one of eight Mexican artists invited outside the official national selection, and the VI Tokyo Biennale, as part of the Mexican presentation.

1962

Carrillo collaborates with Felguérez, Vicente Rojo, and Alberto Gironella on the scenography for Alejandro Jodorowsky's experimental production *La ópera del orden* (The Opera of Order), with each artist creating a distinct section of the set. The production is censored shortly after opening.



The lower portion of the set for Alejandro Jodorowsky's *La ópera del orden*, with, from left to right: Manuel Felguérez, Vicente Rojo, Lilia Carrillo, and Alberto Gironella; photograph by Kati Horna, 1962

Carrillo travels with Felguérez to Lima, where she exhibits at the Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo and spends time with Peruvian artist Fernando de Szyszlo. During their time in Peru, they visit Cusco and Machu Picchu, and Carrillo acquires a collection of pre-Inca textiles.



Spread from the catalogue accompanying concurrent exhibitions by Lilia Carrillo and Manuel Felguérez at the Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo (IAC), Lima, Peru, May 8–19, 1962

1963

Carrillo organizes an exhibition of ancient Peruvian textiles at Galería Juan Martín in Mexico City, drawn from the textiles she collected during her trip to Peru the previous year. Her engagement with textiles also begins to enter her own work through the incorporation of fabric and textile-derived patterns.

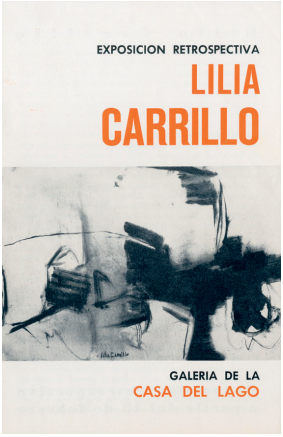
Carrillo is selected for *Arte de América y España*, a major international survey of contemporary art from Spain and the Americas, presented at the Palacio de Cristal and Palacio de Velázquez in Madrid's Parque del Retiro.



Exhibition brochure for *Arte de América y España*, organized by the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica and held at the Palacio de Exposiciones del Retiro, Madrid, 1963

1964

Carrillo presents a retrospective at the Galería de la Casa del Lago, UNAM. Her work is also included in the inaugural exhibition of the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City, in the section devoted to contemporary painting. That same year, she appears alongside other artists and writers in Juan José Gurrola's film *Tajimara*.



Poster for Lilia Carrillo's retrospective exhibition at Galería de la Casa del Lago, UNAM, Mexico City, 1964



Film still from Juan José Gurrola's *Tajimara*, 1964; from left: Manuel Felguérez, Pixie Hopkins, and Michel Strauss; seated: Mercedes Oteyza, Consuelo Kuri, Tamara Garina, Maria Antonieta Dominguez, and Maka Strauss; lying on the floor: Lilia Carrillo

1965

Carrillo's *Seradis* (1963) receives second prize for painting at the Salón Esso at the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City, behind Fernando García Ponce, prompting controversy over the recognition of two abstract painters. As a prize winner, Carrillo participates in the Esso Salon of Young Artists at the Pan American Union in Washington, D.C., juried by figures including Alfred H. Barr Jr., founding director of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Seradis, 1963; Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami

Carrillo participates in *Actitudes plásticas* at UNAM's Galería Aristos, organized by Harold Rosenberg and Juan García Ponce. The exhibition brings together artists from Mexico and the United States, including Willem de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, and Adolph Gottlieb, alongside Gunther Gerzso and Wolfgang Paalen.



Cover of the exhibition catalogue *Actitudes plásticas. Selección de artistas contemporáneos de Estados Unidos y México*, Galería Universitaria Aristos, Mexico City, 1965

1966

Carrillo participates in *Confrontación 66* at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, a major exhibition bringing together established figurative traditions and a younger generation of artists working increasingly with abstraction. Carrillo would later be associated with this generation under the term Generación de la Ruptura.

At the end of the year, she travels to Havana, Cuba, where she presents a solo exhibition at La Casa de las Américas.



Invitation to *Confrontación 66*, Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, 1966

1967

Carrillo participates in *Tendencias del arte abstracto en México* at UNAM's Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Artes, a major survey bringing together several generations of artists associated with abstraction in Mexico.

Curator Fernando Gamboa selects a work by Carrillo for the Mexican Pavilion at Expo 67 in Montreal, a major international presentation of contemporary Mexican art.



Poster for *Tendencias del arte abstracto en México*, Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Artes, Mexico City, 1967

1968

Carrillo participates in the Mexican Pavilion at HemisFair '68 in San Antonio, Texas, conceived by Fernando Gamboa to present pre-Hispanic, colonial, and contemporary Mexican art.

Amid the 1968 student movement protesting government repression and calling for greater political freedoms, Carrillo joins other artists in creating the *Mural efímero* (Ephemeral Mural) on the barrier surrounding the monument to former president Miguel Alemán at Ciudad Universitaria.

Carrillo is a founding member of the Salón Independiente, an artist-led initiative established in opposition to the government-sponsored Salón Solar. Its first exhibition is presented at the Centro Cultural Isidro Fabela in Mexico City.

Carrillo is one of nine artists featured in Juan García Ponce's *Nueve pintores mexicanos* (Nine Mexican Painters), an important critical account of a new generation of Mexican painting.



Presentation of *Nueve pintores mexicanos* at Galería Juan Martín, Mexico City, 1968; from left: Fernando García Ponce, Gabriel Ramírez Aznar, Francisco Corzas, Alberto Gironella, Manuel Felguérez, Lilia Carrillo, Roger von Gunten, Vicente Rojo, Leopoldo Gould, Arnaldo Coen, Juan García Ponce, and Juan Martín; photograph by Héctor García, Colección de Carlos Monsiváis/Museo del Estanquillo

1969

Carrillo creates the monumental mural *La ciudad desbordada, contaminación del aire* (The Overflowing City, Air Pollution), commissioned for the Mexican Pavilion at Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan. Now held by INBAL and preserved at the Museo de Arte Abstracto Manuel Felguérez in Zacatecas, it is Carrillo's largest work.

Carrillo illustrates Rita Murúa's short story "El último rey," published in *La Cultura en México*, the cultural supplement of *Siempre!*, which addresses the state violence that culminated in the Tlatelolco massacre of October 2, 1968.

1970

Carrillo presents her final solo exhibition during her lifetime at Galería Juan Martín in Mexico City.

Late in the year, Carrillo suffers a spinal cord aneurysm that leaves her partially paralyzed and profoundly affects her ability to paint.



Galería Juan Martín, Amberes 17, Zona Rosa, Mexico City, n.d.

1972

Following two years of rehabilitation, Carrillo resumes painting in late 1972. Over the final years of her life, she produces nine paintings, including works intended for the Museo de Arte Moderno and for Rufino Tamayo's collection in Mexico City.



Untitled, 1973; Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City

1974

Carrillo works on the last of the nine paintings produced following her rehabilitation. On June 6, she dies from complications related to her spinal cord aneurysm. She leaves a handful of works unfinished.

Several months after Carrillo's death, the Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City presents *Homenaje a Lilia Carrillo*, a posthumous retrospective bringing together 117 works. The accompanying catalogue includes an essay by Juan García Ponce.


Lea Ud. Jueves de EXCELSIOR

LA ACADEMIA DE ARTES
se une al duelo por el fallecimiento de la artista

LILIA CARRILLO
esposa del académico Manuel Felguérez.

México, D. F., 8 de junio de 1974

Obituary notice placed by the Academia de Artes following the death of Lilia Carrillo, Mexico City, June 8, 1974

1979

Promoción de las Artes, A.C. in Monterrey presents *Homenaje a Lilia Carrillo*, an exhibition of twenty works accompanied by a catalogue that republishes Juan García Ponce's essay "Lilia Carrillo en su obra."



Invitation for *Homenaje a Lilia Carrillo*, Promoción de las Artes, A.C. in Monterrey, 1979

1988

Carrillo's work is included in *Ruptura 1952–1965* at the Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil in Mexico City, a landmark exhibition that helps establish the term Generación de la Ruptura.

1990

Carrillo's work is included in *La mujer en México / Women in Mexico* at the National Academy of Design in New York, curated by Edward J. Sullivan as part of *Mexico: A Work of Art*, a major citywide program of exhibitions and cultural events devoted to Mexican art and culture.



Cover of the exhibition catalogue *La mujer en México / Women in Mexico*, National Academy of Design, New York, 1990

1992

The Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO) presents a retrospective of Carrillo's work bringing together 130 works. The accompanying catalogue includes an essay by Jaime Moreno Villarreal.

1993

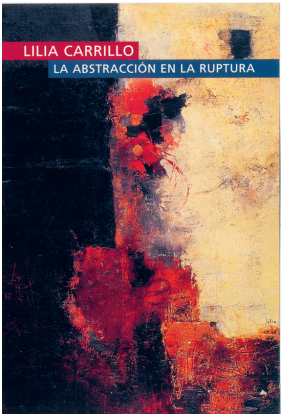
Jaime Moreno Villarreal publishes *Lilia Carrillo: La constelación secreta*, one of the principal monographic studies devoted to Carrillo's work.



Cover of *Lilia Carrillo: La constelación secreta*, 1993

2003

The Museo José Luis Cuevas in Mexico City presents *Lilia Carrillo: La abstracción en la Ruptura*, bringing together 43 paintings and collages. The accompanying catalogue includes a new essay by writer and critic Margo Glantz examining Carrillo's place within Mexican abstraction and the Generación de la Ruptura.



Cover of *Lilia Carrillo: La abstracción en la Ruptura*, 2003

2012

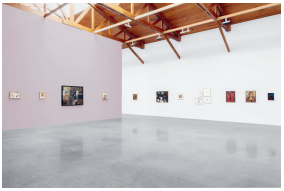
Carrillo's work is included in *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), the first large-scale international survey devoted to women Surrealist artists in North America. The exhibition subsequently travels to the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec and the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City.

2014

Marking forty years since Carrillo's death, the Museo de Arte Abstracto Manuel Felguérez in Zacatecas, Mexico, presents *Lilia Carrillo: Abstraccionismo lírico. Su legado a 40 años*. The exhibition subsequently travels to the Museo de Arte de Querétaro.

2024

kurimanzutto presents *Los Lilia Carrillo de Lilia Carrillo* in Mexico City, bringing together works from the artist's personal collection preserved by Manuel Felguérez. The exhibition is accompanied by a publication and archival material made available by Carrillo's grandsons, Ricardo and Ernesto Guerra de la Peña.



Installation view of *Los Lilia Carrillo de Lilia Carrillo*, kurimanzutto, Mexico City, 2024

2025

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, acquires Carrillo's *La voz del sueño* (The Voice of the Dream, 1965) for its collection.



La voz del sueño, 1965; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

The Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City presents *Lilia Carrillo: Todo es sugerente*, bringing together more than 100 works and archival materials and marking the first extensive presentation of her work at the museum in more than five decades.

The exhibition is accompanied by a monograph, with contributions by Daniel Garza Usabiaga, Rita Eder, Leah Dickerman, Tobias Ostrander, Esteban García, and Jaime Moreno Villarreal.

2026

Americas Society in New York presents *Lilia Carrillo: Ruptures and Premonitions*, curated by Tobias Ostrander, bringing together 24 paintings from 1961 to 1974 alongside archival materials. An illustrated publication accompanies the exhibition.



Installation view of *Lilia Carrillo: Ruptures and Premonitions*, Americas Society, New York, 2026

Lilia Carrillo: Todo es sugerente travels to the Museo de Arte Abstracto Manuel Felguérez in Zacatecas.