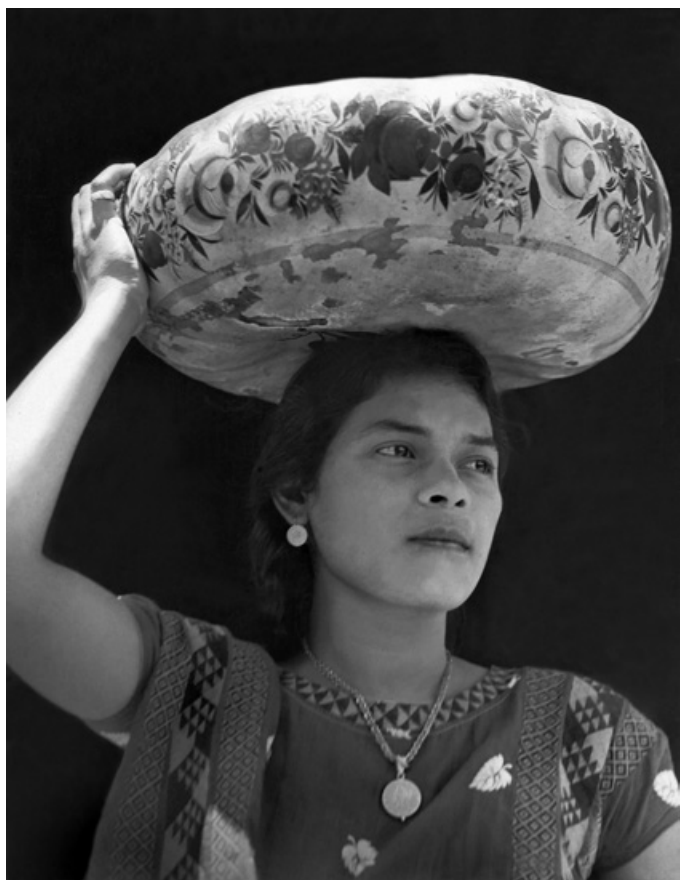


June 8th
– September 3rd 2023

Eng

Tina Modotti

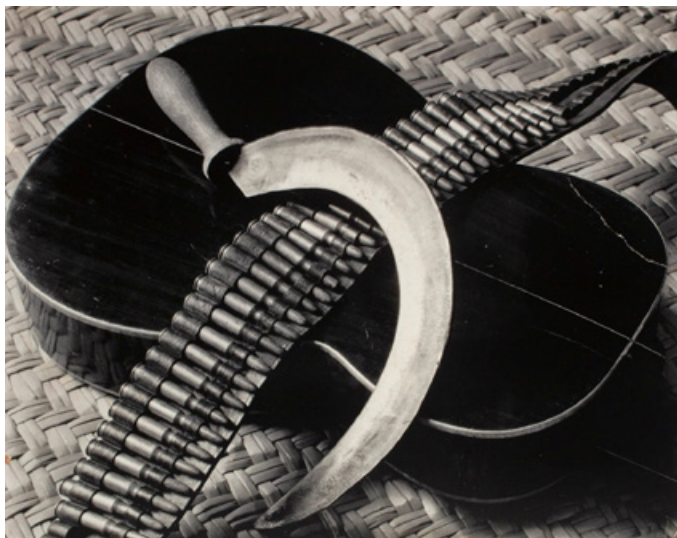




Untitled (Indians carrying loads of corn husks for the making of "tamales"), 1926–1929

The life of Tina Modotti (Udine, August 16th 1896-Mexico City, January 5th 1942) was influenced by some of the most important historical events of the 1920s and 30s. A citizen of the world – as many have considered her – Modotti's work and her life have been surrounded by uncertainties that have only been resolved after in depth study, although some gaps still remain.

Modotti lived in several countries, among them Spain, which coupled with her agitated political militancy led to the dispersion of her work. Consequently, as pointed out by the show's curator Isabel Tejada, this "decontextualizes and disorients her production, making it impossible to date many of her images with precision". Nevertheless, one could argue that most of her photographic work was produced between 1923 and 1930 while she was in Mexico. During those years, after her apprenticeship with Edward Weston, Modotti evolved from the perfection of abstract forms to a different and more personal gaze that was conditioned by her outlook on life and her notable attraction to human beings and social injustice. She went on to portray the precarious conditions of workers, inequalities, and misery



Canana, sickle and guitar, 1927

in urban areas. Likewise, she focused on women and their role within the community as well as the forms and symbols of working class emancipation. In her eagerness to promote awareness, Modotti produced images denouncing injustice, while honoring the dispossessed; some had propagandistic purposes and were intended for publications and magazines.

The exhibition being presented at Fundación MAPFRE is the most comprehensive show dedicated to Tina Modotti to date. Thanks to the work of Isabel Tejeda, we are able to contemplate a large number of the artist's originals that have been assembled through the curator's research. Nearly 200 photographs (predominantly vintage prints) have been grouped chronologically into four sections. Furthermore, a wide range of documentary materials will be on display along with the projection of one of the Hollywood films Modotti featured in. The exhibition is completed with works by photographers that were closely related to her, such as Edward Weston. This exhibition reconstructs Modotti's figure without fissures for the first time, both in terms of her facets as an artist/photographer and as a revolutionary/anti-fascist militant.

KEYS

TINA MODOTTI AND FILM

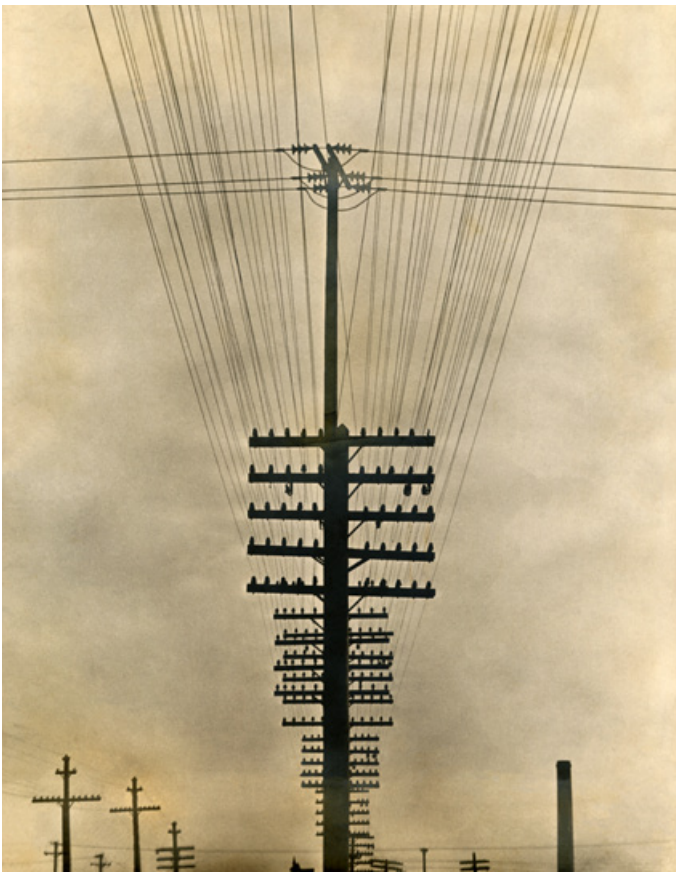
Tina Modotti's first contact with the performing arts took place in San Francisco, in 1913, when she was only 16 years old. In 1920, after participating in a few plays, she made her way into the world of film. At the time, actresses were sought out to embody heroines, adventurers, or femme fatales. With her dark hair and complexion, Tina seemed to fit the prototype of an exotic woman; a cliché that she would try to distance herself from shortly after. Modotti was cast in three films: *Tiger's Coat* (1920) by Roy Clemens, in the role of Jean Ogilvie; *Riding with Death* (1921) by Jacques Jaccard, as Rosa Carilla; and *I Can Explain* (1922) by George D. Baker, as Carmencita Gárdez.

IDEAL OF BEAUTY, SOCIAL IDEAL, POLITICAL IDEAL

After her instruction with Edward Weston (it should be noted that she did not receive a formal education in photography) Tina Modotti's work developed within the group that dominated artistic life in Mexico in the 1920s. Between 1926 and 1929 Modotti dissected popular Mexican life; not only were individuals worthy of her attention, but also water tanks, houses, the corn peasants ate and the hats they wore, sickles symbolizing communism, machetes, or the woman (appearing like a sculpture) who carried a flag and personified the commitment to the revolutionary struggle. All of her images possess great clarity and substance. They leave no room for rhetoric, while allowing for the artist's political, social, and aesthetic ideals to fuse into one.

MEXICAN SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

Some authors have pointed to Tina Modotti's proletariat origins as the basis for her way of confronting social motifs and human figures. If some have defined this part of her work as "reportage photography", one must point out that the artist's curiosity and will to capture a person's life in one image separates her from simple illustrative intent. One could argue that her portrayals of indigenous Mexican people, women, babies, and children are ethnographic photographs, albeit produced in a spontaneous way without an anthropological purpose. Therefore, despite being her point of departure, Modotti distances herself from the travelers who ventured into Mexican lands with a manner of curiosity that lay between science and romanticism.



Telegraph lines, c. 1924–1925

INTERNATIONAL RED AID

The Spanish section of the MOPR (International Red Aid) was established clandestinely in 1923 with the objective of disseminating political propaganda amid the climate of Primo de Rivera's (1923-1930) dictatorship and had as another of its objectives to defend the Spanish Republic and its anti-fascist ideals. The MOPR spread throughout the entire world after its founding in the Soviet Union in 1922. Politically, the organization had to follow the directives of the Communist Party, but in its facet dedicated to solidarity it played a key role in humanitarian aid. In Spain, after the October Revolution in Asturias in 1934, it became the main organization dedicated to helping and aiding political detainees and their families. However, during the Spanish Civil War, the MOPR would constitute the true basis for the medical system of the Republican military.

Dates

From June 8th
to September 9th 2023

Curatorship

Isabel Tejada, assisted
by Eva M. Vives Jiménez

Opening hours

Tuesdays – Sundays
(and public holidays):
11 am-8 pm
Last entry: 7.30 pm

Visitors must leave the galleries
10 minutes before closing time

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Admissions

Standard ticket: 5 €
Ticket with reduction: 3 €
Free standard ticket: Tuesdays
(except public holidays)
Groups: 3 € / per person

Commented visit (cultural mediation service)

Wednesdays & Thursdays: 5-8 pm
Fridays & Saturdays:
12-2 pm, 5-8 pm
Sundays & public holidays: 12-2 pm
(Not available in august)

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Tell us what you think about
the exhibition: #KBrTinaModotti

[kbr.fundacionmapfre.org/
exposiciones/tina-modotti](http://kbr.fundacionmapfre.org/exposiciones/tina-modotti)



Cover: *Woman of Tehuantepec carrying jicalpextle*, 1929

