



SHE-NÁWATL
Francisco López-Ruiz

Story editor & maps
Sandra Varela Alba (Alva)

ENGLISH & SPANISH VERSIONS
June 2020

Available at
https://youtu.be/zByb_xGzsM

This is an academic work
for limited distribution
and no commercial purposes.

1. HOOK

Did you know that a tree with teeth is used
in Mexico City to indicate a subway
station?

(Bernard Herrmann's "Shower Scene"

Psycho, 1960)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Me-VhC9ieh0>)

2. TESTIMONIAL & OUTCOME

My name is Francisco López-Ruiz. I am a Mexican architect and I love the emblems of the Mexico City's transport system.

(The rest of the video will present
still images and footage with
occasional insert shots of presenter)

Nahuatl is an incredibly beautiful, poetic, powerful language.

In this 30-minutes video, you will see how Nahuatl is alive in Mexico City's names of places.

Every transport station is represented by a graphic symbol. Mexico City has a unique visual system in the world.

3. VISUAL CULTURE IN THE SUBWAY

In 1966, the US designer Lance Wyman created the Olympic Games' logo.

Wyman also designed a set of images for representing every single sport.

For the first time, the Olympics had no words: just colors, contours and numbers.

Lance Wyman lead the team that created the signage of the new subway network.

(Titles)

Lance Wyman
Francisco Gallardo
Arturo Quiñones

First three subway lines
1968 - 1971

Since then, devoted anonymous professionals have designed an emblem (or imagotype) for every station in the subway, metrobús, urban trains and trolley's lines.

Half a century later, Mexico City has a visual system formed by over 500 symbols. These images display an impressive three-millennium cultural heritage in the basin of Mexico.

Names of streets are the first logical choice. Many streets are dedicated to historical figures.

Synthesis is required. Mouths never appear. Still, moustaches are welcome. If available, helmets, feather crests, horses, earrings, bandoliers and cannons make all the difference.

ZAPATA
CORREGIDORA
MOCTEZUMA
GENERAL ANAYA

Gandhi metrobús station is next to the Museum of Modern Art.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Arch's Pedro Ramírez Vázquez

& Rafael Mijares
1964

GANDHI metrobús station
2018

Two-decked bus

Mohandas Gandhi
(1869 – 1948)
Indian lawyer
Peaceful nationalist

The imagotype of the station is constructed with triangles. Even so, the composition is enriched by the soft curves present in the tunic and the bare feet.

We recognize Gandhi because of his bald head, the walking stick and the subtle inclusion of round-rimmed glasses.

The "B"-shaped box indicates this is a metrobús station. Gandhi's imagotype is a beautiful, elegant, memorable design.

The transport stations might also allude to statues, monuments, palaces and other important buildings.

BELLAS ARTES
1969

CHOPO
2005

DIANA
2018

Mexico City has changed (sometimes for good), but the transport emblems still commemorate the previous urban images.

REFINERÍA
1988

Parque Bicentenario

Arch. Mario Schjetnan
2010

(She-Nahuatl)

Mexica toponyms—or name of places--are the most spectacular protagonists of the Mexico City's transportation system.

(She-Nahuatl)

xochi flower
milli sown fields
-co locative suffix

Xochimilco
[ʃo:tʃi'mi:lkɔ]
The Place with the Sown Parcels

(Glyph & Imagotype
Urban context)

Nahuatl names evoke relevant qualities of places and culture.

(She-Nahuatl)

mixtli cloud
cóatl serpent
-co locative suffix: "in"

Mixcoac
[miʃ'kw:ak]
At the Cloud of Serpents

The Milky Way—a god

Mexico City has the cheapest subway ticket in the world. For one US dollar, you can buy four unlimited trips.

195 stations
140 miles | 226km
12 lines

MIXCOAC
1985

And if you are at Mixcoac station, you can also visit the lovely Museum of Subway... for free.

Museo del Metro
Curator:
Vanessa Bohórquez López
2017

Sometimes, the emblems of the stations reinterpret Pre-Hispanic visuality from a contemporary sensibility.

Museo Nacional de Antropología
Arch's Pedro Ramírez Vázquez
Jorge Campuzano
Rafael Mijares
1964

The central glyph of the Solar Stone represents the "fifth sun": the time in which the Mexica lived. The four limbs are the previous four suns (or worlds), successively created and destroyed by gods.

Tonatiuh, the Fifth Sun, stands at the center. The glyph is called *Ollin*: "perpetual movement". It probably alludes to a pertinent balance in life, as an alternative from plunging into chaos (or static death).

The National Institute of History and Anthropology adapted this glyph as its institutional logo.

In 2018, the Ollin glyph became the imagotype of the closest bus station to the National Museum of Anthropology.

ANTROPOLOGÍA
2018

4. IMAGOTYPES IN MEXICO CITY

CINEMATIC SEQUENCE 1
1min

1962's hit
Sonia López (photo)
& La Sonora Santanera
El ladrón

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1z2xyJJfPg>

Developing (process) photos
Transportation cards
Tickets

HIDALGO 1969
JUÁREZ 1969
INSURGENTES SUR 2012
(Banknotes & Imagotypes)

REFORMA 2005
REVOLUCIÓN 1969
PLAZA DE LA REPÚBLICA 2005
MUSEO SAN CARLOS 2012
CENTRO CULTURAL UNIVERSITARIO 2011
(Imagotypes & Urban context)

IMSS
UNIVERSIDAD 1983
POLITÉCNICO 1982
UAM-I 1994
(Imagotypes & Logos)

SONORA 2005
MERCADO SONORA 2012
(Imagotypes and people)

Collections of imagotypes

END OF ACT I

ACT II
NAHUATL & GLYPHS

5. SHE-NAHUATL

(She-Nahuatl)

Nahuatl is, in fact, a group of 30 related languages. Some of them are so divergent that are mutually unintelligible.

(She-Nahuatl)

Even so, they all share many similarities. Today, almost two million people speak one of the Nahuatl variants.

(She-Nahuatl)

Contemporary versions are different from "classic Nahuatl" used half a millennium ago.

(She-Nahuatl)

Nahuatl are agglutinative languages: two or more words can fuse to coin a new meaning.

(She-Nahuatl)

atl agua
wéxotl willow

awéxotl
[a'we:sot̪ɬ]
willow that lives in the water
(*Salix bonplandiana*)

(She-Nahuatl)

Nahuatl are also polysynthetic languages. Fusion of words encourage rich, amazing, poetic constructions.

(She-Nahuatl)

tentli lips
-istli abstract suffix

tentilistli

[ten:ti'lis:t̪̄li]
hunger

Most of Nahuatl words have just one or two syllables. Words drastically compress, keeping just a phoneme.

(She-Nahuatl)

nawáti to sound
clearly, pleasantly
tlahtölli language

nahuatl
['na:wat̪̄l]
clear, pleasant language

Nahuatl is a powerful language, full of poetry and wonder.

(She-Nahuatl)

tetl stone
tsontli hair

tesontl
[te'sont̪̄l]
stone light as hair

(She-Nahuatl)

tetl

(She-Nahuatl)

tetl stone

tépetl
['te:pet̪̄l]
hill

(She-Nahuatl)

in alt water
in tépetl hill

altepetl
[al'te:pet̪̄l]

The Nation

(She-Nahuatl)

tetl stone
tótotl bird
totótetl
[to'to:tet^l]
bird stones

(She-Nahuatl)

centzontótatl
[x]
bird of the 400 voices

(She-Nahuatl)

ehecatótatl
birds of the wind

Duplicated nouns indicate abundance:
hyperboles.

(She-Nahuatl)

atl water
wé old
wéwe old-old

awewétl
[a'we:wet^l]
the old (very old) in the water
(*Texodium mexicanum*)

(She-Nahuatl)

achichiliqe
[a'w:wt^l]
achichiliqe
(*Aechmophorus clarkii*)
Clark's grebe

6. TLAKWATSIN

CINEMATIC SEQUENCE 2

Ne m'oublie pas

René Aubrey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1eqdD6uLdY>

1.

Opossums are the only marsupials in Mexico.

(Footage)

Opossums and their typical tail

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njqEjVctBjc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpzqNpKWor0>

2.

Opossums have some fascinating features:

- They eat a lot
- Shy... but steal food from humans
- They have hands and a bare tail
- Females have a bag at their bellies
- In danger, opossums fake their death

(Opossum faking death)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5fJ99bQmug>

3.

There is Mexica myth: at the beginning, humans needed fire for cooking and sleeping warmly, but gods were ruthless.

4.

Humans commissioned formidable animals to bring fire. All these impressive beasts failed miserably.

5.

With tricks, the little opossum got close to the bonfire, in the House of the Gods. And *Tlakwatsin*, the opossum, stole the fire for humans.

(Marsupials)

6.

The brave Tlakwatsin put the fire in his belly and ran away, but his tail was burned.

Furious gods cut the opossum into pieces.

(Opossum faking death)

7.

However, Tlakwatsin rised from the dead.

Opossums voracity and their astute behavior inspired his Nahuatl name.

8.

(She-Nahuatl)

tla prefix: "something"
kwa to eat
-tsin reverencial suffix

tlakwatsin
[tɬa'kwa:tsin]

Our Little, Precious Glutton

9.

Tlakwatsin's unimpressive look turned him into an unsuspected, intrepid action hero.

10.

Alfredo López Austin
Los mitos del tlacuache
1996

7. NAHUATL TOPOONYMS

Birgitta Leander (photo)
Herencia cultural del mundo náhuatl
a través de la lengua
1972

(She-Nahuatl)

Nahuatl toponyms are both descriptions and symbols.

(She-Nahuatl)

tlālli earth
-pan locative suffix, "over"

Tlalpan
['tlal:pan]
Over the earth

(She-Nahuatl)

tlālli earth
nepantla between

Tlalnepantla
[t̪lal:ne'pan:t̪la]
Between The Two Kingdoms

Miguel León-Portilla
"Los nombres de lugar en náhuatl,
su morfología, sintaxis
y representación glífica"
1982

(She-Nahuatl)

**Nahuatl toponyms are narrative pieces:
small jewels tailored in a brief, powerful,
evocative way.**

(She-Nahuatl)

yákatl nose
tépetl hill
-co locative suffix

Tepeyác (ac)
[te:pe'ja:kak]
Where the Hills Begin

(She-Nahuatl)

tentli lip

atl water
-co locative suffix

Atenco
[a'ten:ko]
On The Bank of The Lake

(She-Nahuatl)

8. NAHUATL & MEXICA WORLDVIEW

CINEMATIC SEQUENCE 3
(Pre-Hispanic instruments)
Minecraft first minute

1.

In the Mexica worldview,
“nature” is not just an “asset”
alienated from humankind

2.

Human beings are not “owners”
that “deserve” to “exploit”
their “resources”

3.

Animals, plants, landscapes
and Nahuatl are all mutually
interconnected.

Mutually embraced, together.

4.

Split screen:
The beak of a pelican in estrus
Ehécatl-Ketsalk'watl in Codex Borgia

5.

Split screen:
The neck of an anhinga swimming
A representation of Ehécatl-Ketsalkwatl

6.

ehécatl the wind
ketsal quetzal
kówatl serpent

Ehécatl-Ketsalkówatl
[e? 'e:.kat?l.ket?sa?l'kwa:t?l]
Quetzal-Feathered Serpent
God of Wind, Cycles, Wisdom and Learning

7.

The basin of Mexico was a winged lake,
dressed with dense plumage,
whispering with the wind.

8.



(footage)

Anhingas flying and diving
(*Anhinga anhinga*)
American White Pelicans
(*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BshIACA3YLs&t=31s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EfoqPIcSQCQ>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJtF4VvKBTA>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_ymRTt_cfE
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzTpOL9KpQA>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msNM72-pH_c
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1G1NIGUrr0>

9.

Gabriel Espinosa
El embrujo del lago
1996

MIDPOINT
(Snail)
Ketsalk'wtl

9. NAHUATL IS SO GOOD

(She-Nahuatl)

**Nahuatl is the fierce expression of
meaningful, interconnected realities.**

(She-Nahuatl)

tlālli earth
tecuhtli Lord

Tlaltecuhltli
[t̪lal:te'kw?:t̪li]
Our Lady / Our Lord of Nourishment
Fertile Monster of Earth

(She-Nahuatl)

Mictlantecuhltli
[mik:t̪lan:te'kw?:t̪li]
Lord of the Lowest Underworld

(She-Nahuatl)

xíuhitl | fire
| year
| turquoise

Xiuhtecúhtli
[ʃiwt̪e'kw?:t̪li]

Turquoise Lord
Our Lord of Fire

(She-Nahuatl)

wé old
wéwe old-old
téotl god

Wewetéotl
[we:we'teot̪l]

Our Very Precious Father
The Center of All Directions

(She-Nahuatl)

Nahuatl melts words, visuality and signification into a stunning worldview.

10. ANCIENT GODS BUILT EMPIRES

CINEMATIC SEQUENCE 4

(Aztec Drums of War)

1 min

1.

Wewetéotl-Xiuhtecuhtli,
Our Lord of Fire,
arrived the first
to the basin of Mexico.

Our Very Precious Father
is the oldest god

2.

(Cuicuilco's ancient brasero)

3.

His head evokes a volcano.

One hand is upward.
The other hand? A fist!

This is the power of fire (and gods):
To create... and destroy.

4.

(Different Teotihuacan Wéwes:
palms up... and fists!)

5.

Three thousand years ago,
Cuicuilco raised as the first great city
of the basin of Mexico.

6.

MAP 1 This world
MAP 2 North America
MAP 3 The Five Likes &
the Iztapalapan Peninsula

MAP 4
1200 aC - 200 bC
Cuicuilco
[kʷi'kʷil:ko]
In the Place of the Many Songs
20,000 people

7.

Wewetéotl
--Our Very Precious Father--
protected Cuiculcans
and granted them
a thousand years of splendor.

8.

Cuiculcans understood
the talents and dangers of fire.

The basin of Mexico
is full of volcanoes
disguised as hills.

9.

The main temple in Cuicuilco
is a volcano faced west.

10.

Split screen:
Gran Basamento & Xitle
Gran Basamento & Olympic Stadium

11.

Xitle
['ʃi:t̪ʃi]
Navel

12.

ca 200 bC

Xitle erupts.

Not a spectacular blast,
but consecutive soft flows of lava.

Cuiculco and the crops, ruined.

Splendor switches to Teotihuacan.

13.

Later... *Chichimecas*!:
the Barbaric in The Lakes.

Newcomers don't love
Old Venerable Wewetéotl
--a suffering god.

The northerners demand
more fulminant gods.

14.

(Footage)
A hummingbird

15.

MAP 5

The basin of Mexico
and Cuicuilco.
Adds Tenayuca.

1200

Tenayuca
[te:na'ju:ka]
City of Walls

16.

Split screen:
Witsilopóchtli
[wi:t̪silo:p̪o:t̪ʃt̪ɬi]
Our Sacred Lord of
Determination and Drive

Tláloc
['tla:lok]
Nectar of Earth
The Ever Green One

(Fade to)

17.

Split screen:
Witsi's Glyph
Olla Tláloc

18.

Former "Chichimecas"
--now Tenayucans--

invent a new kind of temple
to please their main gods.

Twin temples faced west.

19.

(Tenayuca archeological zone
Museo Xólotl
Major Temples-scale models
Metrobus imagotype)

11. GLYPHS IN CODICES

Glyph
From ancient Greek γλύφω:
to carve or to sculpt sth.

A glyph is an engraved or painted sign in a codex.

Mesoamerican glyphs are visual representations of phonemes, words or even full sentences.

tla something
(i)hkwihoa to write, to paint

tlahkwiloh
[tla?kwi.lo?]
painter, illustrator

Writing and reading glyphs in Mesoamerica was responsibility of specialized women and men.

(Spirit of the Lakes)

Mexica glyphs are paintings that must be read.

Johannes Neurath
"Los libros de piel de venado"
2013

Pre-Hispanic codices are not just "books", and Mexica glyphs are not just "paintings".

Mesoamerican códices are powerful, ritualistic tools from a dynamic universe.

Codices are magic devices that allow gods and humanity to write together their destinies.

(Glyph *altepetl*)

A common glyph to indicate Nahuatl toponyms is *altépetl*.

(She-Nahuatl)

in alt water
in tépetl hill

altepetl
[al'te:pet̚l]
The Nation

The first folio of *Tira de la peregrinación* shows an *altépetl* with a distinctive top.

(She-Nahuatl)

kóltik curvature
-wákan locative suffix: "abundance"

Kolwáhkan
[kol'wa?:kan]
At the Distorted Hill
At the Magical Hill

Maybe the glyph *Kolwáhkan* describes a "real" mountain. Or maybe the curvature of the glyph indicates its miraculous nature.

In the center of the *altepetl*, a sacred cavern. Fir branches. The beak of a hummingbird. And inside, the talking head of a man.

He is the god Witsilopóchtli, urging Aztecs to search the place in which they will fulfill their destiny.

At the end of *Tira de la peregrinación*, appears again the glyph Kolwáhkan, without the sacred cavern.

Here Kolhwákan is not a mythical place, but a site of the basin of Mexico, ruled by Coxcoxtli, *The Pheasant*.

In other interpretations, graphic signifiers in glyphs are not concepts, but phonetic indicators.

(She-Nahuatl)

Mexitli god Witsilopóchtli
-**tzin** reverential suffix
-**co** locative suffix

Mexicatzinco
[me:ʃi:kal'tsin:ko]
In the Venerable Temple
of Mexitli-Witsilopóchtli

(She-Nahuatl)

-**tsin** reverential suffix
tsin(tli) butt

Split screen:
(Codex Aubin & Mexicatzingo Imagotype)

(She-Nahuatl)

Mexicatzinco
[me:ʃi:kal'tsin:ko]
In the Venerable Temple
of Mexitli-Witsilopóchtli

Tsapotítlán is a town swallowed by Mexico City's metropolitan area.

Split screen:
Words and fruits

(She-Nahuatl)
kwatsápotl

[kʷa'tsa:pot̩l]
a **tsapotl** tree

Codex Mendoza offers an impossible image: a ferocious tree with open jaws and teeth in the roots.

(She-Nahuatl)

-tlan locative suffix
tlan(tli)tooth

(She-Nahuatl)

Tsapotítlan
[tsa:po'ti:t̩lan]
Between The Tsapotl Trees

(Fade to)

Codex Mendoza
Santiago Tzapotitlan's Logo
Zapotitlán Imagotype
Urban context

Koyowáhkan was a port. Here, in 1521, Hernán Cortés prepared the final naval assault against Mexico-Tenochtitlan.

The first name for the subway station was inspired by a bank institution. Fortunately, things changed soon.

Even if downtown Coyoacán is one mile from the subway station, the Nahuatl toponym prevailed.

(She-Nahuatl)

kóyotl coyote
wá possessive particle
-kan locative suffix

Koyowákan
[ko:jo'wa?:kan]
The Place of The People That Have Coyotes

In Mexica glyphs, coyotes might not be confused with wolves, dogs or deers.

(She-Nahuatl)

kóyotl coyote
koyónki hole

(Fade to)

COYOACÁN
1983

(Codex Mendoza
Coyoacan imagotype)

Three design decisions modernize the image.
The coyote looks back equilibrating the diagonal that splits the composition.

Simplified and “stabilized” legs anchor the figure to a hypothetical ground.

The silky tail balances with its two curves the imagotype.

(Split screen
Glyph & Imagotype)

Mexican sculptor Gabriel Ponzarelli created a fountain at the same time that the subway imagotype was designed.

Gabriel Ponzarelli
1942-2019

La Fuente de los Coyotes
1984

Five minutes walking from Coyoacán subway station is Cineteca Nacional.

Cineteca Nacional
Original project
Manuel Rocha
1984

Remodeling
Michel Rojkind & Gerardo Salinas
2012

The word *kóyotl* also appears in another subway station.

(She-Nahuatl)

nesawáli fasting
kóyotl coyote

Nesawahlkóyotl
[ne:sawa?l'ko:yot~l]
Fasting Coyote

Nezahualcóyotl was a Mexica ruler, poet and architect. He projected a dam to separate fresh and salt waters in the basin of Mexico.

Nezahualcóyotl
1402-1472

(Banknotes)

Nezahualcóyotl also built an aqueduct to provide clean water from Chapultépec to Mexico-Tenochtitlan--the island.

Mexica glyphs link the figure of a person to a symbol that evokes the name.

(Fade to)

Codex Xólotl
Codex Ixtlilxóchitl
Códex Duran

Glyph & Imagotype
Neza Logo

Urban context

Enrique Carbajal González, Sebastián
Coyote hambiente, 2009
Hierro y concreto armado

(She-Nahuatl)

**Nahuatl toponyms are written poems.
Glyphs in codices are visual poems.**

12. TIRA DE LA PEREGRINACIÓN

CINEMATIC SEQUENCE 5

Chocani

Nayeli Cortés, 2019

(Photo)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wy231dMQKCs>

1.

Aztlan

Place of White Herons

an island

(Glyph)

2.

1168

Witsilopóchtli orders Aztecs
to leave their island.

Footprints stand for the
search of a destiny.

(Glyph)

3.

1169

The first sacrifice.

"From this moment,
you are no longer Aztecs,
but Mexicas".

Mexih is another name for Witsilopóchtli.

(Glyph)

4.

MAP 6

The previous one

with Cuicuilco and Tenayuca.
From now, a line from the north
links the Mexica peregrination
to the rest of toponyms.

1260
Ehecatépec
[eʔ:e:ka'te:pek]
Hill Where the Wind Blows

5.
(Ehecatépec glyph &
Ecatepec imagotype
Urban context)

6.
MAP 7

1300
Pantítlan
[pan'ti:tłan]
Alongside Flags

7.
Codex Florentinus | wreck
Ahuízotl
The Lakes

8.
(Pantitlan glyph & imagotype
Urban context)

9.
MAP 8

1332
Chapultépec
[t̪ʃa:pul'te:pek]
In the hill with grasshoppers

10.
(Glyph & Imagotype
Modern versions of the glyph)

11.
The Mexica remain for 20 years

in Chapultépec.

Kolwáhkans attack them.

The Mexica loose and hide in Acolco.
(*Tira*)

12.

MAP 9
Acolco
[a:'kol:ko]
Where the Water Twist in Meanders

13.
(Glyph & Imagotype
Urban context)

14.

MAP 10
Mixiuhcan
[mi:'ʃi'w?ka:n]
The Place Where the Baby Is Born

15.
Codex Azcatitlan
(Glyph & Imagotype
Urban context)

16.
The Mexica, prisoners.

Coxcoxtli (The Pheasant)
is the powerful king
of Kolwáhkan nation.

Kolwáhkan becomes the jail of the Mexica.

(*Tira*)

17.
MAP 11

1355
Kolwáhkan
[kol'wa?:kan]

At the Distorted Hill

18.

(Glyph & Imagotype
Urban context)

19.

Coxcoxtli ask the Mexica
to fight Xochimilco taking 8,000
prisoners.

To prove it, the Mexica are asked to
put 8,000 ears in bags.

(*Tira*)

20.

MAP 12

Xochimilco

[ʃo:tʃi'mi:lko]

The Place with the Sown Parcels

21.

Codex Mendoza
(Fire)

The Mexica win.
Xochimilco looses.

(Glyph)

22.

Instead of ears, the Mexica take noses:
they are eager to demonstrate
they are not duplicating
the number of beaten enemies.

(*Tira*)

23.

(Titles)

Tira de la peregrinación
Patrick Johanssohn
Año

24.

Former Aztecs—now the Mexicas—
finally find a new island.

From here, they will
conquer the basin of Mexico—and beyond.

25.

Codex Mendoza
(Glyph)

26.

(Painting of Mexico-Tenochtitlan)

27.

MAP 13

1519

Mexico-Tenochtitlan
200,000 people

28.

(Imagotype & National Emblem
Zócalo)

END OF ACT II

ACT III
TOPONYMS AND GLYPHS TODAY

13. MAJOR (WARRIOR) TEMPLES

Pedro Ramírez Vázquez created excellent site museums, as the one in Teotihuacan.

Arch. Pedro Ramírez Vázquez
1919-2013

Yet, Great Temple is my favorite. Here, at the heart of Mexico City, the architect inspired himself in the twin temple tradition.

Museo del Templo Mayor
Arch's Pedro Ramírez Vázquez
Jorge Ramírez Campuzano
1987

Templo Mayor is the wildest museum designed by the Mexican architect. The northern half of the building is dedicated to Witsilopochtli: a solar god.

From the top of the hypothetical pyramid we climb, Ramírez Vázquez designed a spectacular set of visuals. All of them evoke the splendor of ancient and proud Mexico-Tenochtitlan. And highlights the magnificence of contemporary Mexico City.

When we descend from the northern half of Museo del Templo Mayor, we find Tlaloc: a humid, nightly, mysterious god.

I like that this untamed museum exhibits what we—modern Mexicans—believe to know about the Pre-Hispanic era, but it also strips all we don't know yet.

Museo del Templo Mayor is full of life (and death). And, in a way, this building is the last heir of a tradition initiated a millennium ago by fierce Tenayucans.

14. IMAGOTYPES & CDMX (TODAY)

CINEMATIC SEQUENCE 6
Of Man and Wolf
Metallica
Live in Mexico City
Foro Sol, 2017
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNJkZsDLGaE>

(Twin Temples)
Site Archeological Museum - Tenayuca
National Museum of Anthropology
Visión de Anáhuac exhibition
Roof Museo Templo Mayor

SANTA CECILIA ACATITLA
TLALNEPANTLA
Acheological Site
Museum
Urban context

ACATITLA

CIUDAD DEPORTIVA
Foro Sol
Metallica
2017 Ticket

CUATRO CAMINOS
1970

CANDELARIA
1969

Arch. Félix Candela
(1910-1997)

NATIVITAS
1979

SANTA ANITA
1982

15. MEXICAN DREIGROSCHENOPER

An original worldview, linguistic outputs and the powerful visuality of Pre-Hispanic culture intertwine even today.

(She-Nahuatl)

Nahuatl is a moving force, built by the sweetness of its sounds. The richness of meanings and the expressive power of Nahuatl live in a complex and beautiful writing system.

(Spirit of The Lakes)

Nahuatl, visual culture, architecture and innovation conveys in Mexico City: a

vibrant, creative, formidable place, in the basin, along with The Lakes.

Three millennium of culture and history

Tezontle

Mictlantecuhtli

Broken city. Infamous city

And also a city like no other

16. CHINAMPA AS CULTURE

(Footage)

María Candelaria

1943, Emilio Fernández

(Girl tolling the bells)

Mexico City is located
in a basin, not in a "valley"

The Lakes of Mexico City
are still alive

Xochimilco

UNESCO World Heritage Site

XOCHIMILCO

1988

(Glyph & Imagotipe
Urban Context)

(Fade to)

(Footage)

Video Tláhuac

La chinampa como cultura

<https://www.facebook.com/477790312717450/posts/871620433334434/>

17. ENDING CREDITS

Sandra Varela Alba (Alva)

| She-Nahuatl

| Maps

| Story editor

| English texts editor

Maria Itze Lemus

| Spirit of The Lakes

Francisco López-Ruiz

| Storytelling

To Quarantined Mexico City

CDMX

June 2020

Special thanks

Roberta Vasallo

Alejandra Monroy

Anamaría González

Marcela López Enríquez

Verónica, Marcelo y Brenda Arzani

Erika Zorrilla

Main sources

COSTA, JOAN. *Señalética corporativa.*

Barcelona: Costa Punto Com, 2008

CHAVES, NORBERTO. *La imagen corporativa.*

Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1988

ESPINOSA PINEDA, GABRIEL. *El embrujo del lago.* México: UNAM, 1996

GÓMEZ DE SILVA, GUIDO. *Diccionario breve de mexicanismos.* México: FCE, 2008

JOHANSSON, PATRICK. *Tira de la peregrinación*. México: "Arqueología Mexicana", 2007.

LEANDER, BIRGITTA. *Herencia cultural del mundo náhuatl a través de la lengua*. México: SEP, 1972

LEÓN-PORTILLA, MIGUEL. "Los nombres de lugar en náhuatl, su morfología, sintaxis y representación glífica". México: "Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl", vol. 15, UNAM, 1982

LÓPEZ AUSTIN, ALFREDO. *Los mitos del tlacuache*. México: UNAM, 1996

NEURATH, JOHANNES. "Los libros de piel de venado". México: "Artes de México", 2013

WRIGHT CARR, DAVID CHARLES. *Lectura del náhuatl*. México: INAL, 2007

Footage

Soundtrack

Bernard Herrmann
The murderer--Psycho
1960

Ladrón
La Sonora Santanera
1962

Ne m'oublie pas
René Aubrey
2014

Mindcraft

Aztec Drums of War
Pedro Ferraz
2017

Chocani (La llorona)
Nayeli Cortés

2019

Of Man and Wolf
Metallica Live
Mexico City
2017

SHE-NAHUATL & HER SUBWAY

Francisco López-Ruiz

COMPLEMENTO | ESPAÑOL

1. GANCHO

¿Has visto las fauces abiertas de un árbol, enseñándote los dientes como si te fuera a tragar? El metro de la Ciudad de México tiene un árbol así.

2. TESTIMONIAL Y RESUMEN

Me llamo Francisco López Ruiz. Soy arquitecto y me gustan mucho los símbolos que representan estaciones del transporte público en la Ciudad de México.

El náhuatl es un idioma hermoso, poético y poderoso.

En este video de 30 minutos, verás cómo el náhuatl otorga identidad y carácter a sitios importantes.

La Ciudad de México es única en el mundo: cuenta una familia de símbolos que representan estaciones del transporte público.

3. CULTURA VISUAL EN EL METRO

En 1966, el diseñador estadounidense Lance Wyman creó el logotipo de los Juegos Olímpicos.

Wyman también diseñó imágenes específicas para representar cada deporte.

Por vez primera, los Juegos Olímpicos no necesitaron palabras para comunicar: solamente colores, números y formas.

Lance Wyman dirigió al equipo que concibió la señalética de la nueva red de metro.

Desde entonces, otros diseñadores, creativos y talentosos, han diseñado emblemas (o imagotipos) para identificar cada estación de metro, metrobús, tren urbano y trolebús.

Después de medio siglo, la Ciudad de México cuenta con un sistema visual formado por más de 500 emblemas. Estas imágenes evocan la extraordinaria riqueza de la cuenca de México: un patrimonio cultural de tres mil años.

Los nombres de calles son la opción más socorrida para nombrar una estación de transporte. Muchas calles recuerdan a personajes históricos.

La síntesis es una virtud. ¿Las bocas? ¡Prohibidas! Y sin embargo, los bigotes son bienvenidos. Si se puede, cascós, penachos, caballos, aretes, carrilleras y cañones hacen el día.

La estación de metrobús Gandhi se encuentra junto al Museo de Arte Moderno.

El imagotipo de la estación se basa en triángulos. Sin embargo, la dureza de la composición se suaviza con la incorporación de curvas: la túnica, los pies desnudos.

Reconocemos a Gandhi por la calva, el bastón y la sutil presencia de unos anteojos redondos.

Una caja en forma de "B" indica que estamos en el metrobús. El diseño dedicado a Gandhi es elegante, sutil y memorable.

Las estaciones de transporte también pueden referir la existencia de estatuas, monumentos, palacios y otros edificios destacados.

La Ciudad de México ha cambiado (a veces, para bien). Aun así, los imagotipos del transporte público recuerdan la imagen urbana previa.

(She-Nahuatl)

Los topónimos mexicas --o nombres de lugar-- son las presencias más espectaculares del sistema de transporte público de la Ciudad de México.

Xochimilco

Estos nombres tan significativos evocan cualidades relevantes de sitios y culturas.

Mixcoac

La Ciudad de México tiene el boleto de metro más barato del mundo. Con un dólar estadounidense viajas cuatro veces, sin límite de distancia.

Y si estás en Metro Mixcoac, puedes visitar el bellísimo Museo del Metro. ¡Gratis!

A veces, los emblemas de las estaciones reinterpretan la visualidad prehispánica con un gusto contemporáneo.

El glifo central de la Piedra del Sol simboliza el “Quinto Sol”: la era de los mexicas. Las cuatro extremidades representan los cuatro soles (o creaciones) precedentes, destruidas sucesivamente por los dioses.

Tonatiuh, el Quinto Sol, ocupa el centro de la composición. Es el glifo *Ollin*: “movimiento perpetuo”. La imagen alude quizá a un hipotético equilibrio vital, en lugar del caos (o la muerte).

El Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia adoptó este glifo y lo convirtió en su logo institucional.

En 2018, la línea 7 del metrobús se inspiró en el glifo Ollin para indicar la cercanía del Museo Nacional de Antropología.

4. IMAGOTIPOS EN LA CIUDAD DE MÉXICO

SECUENCIA ELABORADA 1
El ladrón | Sonora Santanera

5. SHE-NÁHUATL

El náhuatl es, de hecho, una superfamilia de 30 idiomas con un origen común. Algunas variables han cambiado tanto que sus hablantes no se comprenden entre sí.

Aun así, todas las formas del náhuatl comparten características importantes. En nuestros días, casi dos millones de personas hablan algún idioma náhuatl.

Las versiones contemporáneas son diferentes al "náhuatl clásico" que se usaba hace quinientos años.

Las lenguas nahuas son aglutinantes: dos o más palabras se fusionan para formar un nuevo pensamiento.

ahuéxotl

Las lenguas nahuas son polisintéticas. Su capacidad para comprimirse y fundirse crea expresiones ricas, vitales y poéticas.

tentiliztli

La mayoría de las raíces nahuas tienen solamente una o dos sílabas. Entonces las palabras se comprimen drásticamente: a veces se convierten en un solo fonema.

náhuatl

El náhuatl es un idioma poderoso, entreverado con magia y poesía.

tezontle

tetl

tépetl

altepetl

totótetl

centzontótotl

ehecatótotl

Los sustantivos duplicados implican abundancia: son hipérboles.

ahuéhuatl

achichiliique

6. TLAKWATSIN

SECUENCIA ELABORADA 2

Ne m'oublie pas | René Aubrey

7. TOPÓNIMOS NAHUAS | She-Náhuatl

Los topónimos nahuas son descripciones y símbolos a la vez.

Tlalpan

Tlalnepantla

Los topónimos nahuas son piezas narrativas: pequeñas joyas confeccionadas con un estilo breve, fascinante y vigoroso.

Tepeyác (ac)

Atenco

8. EL NÁHUATL Y EL MUNDO MEXICA

SECUENCIA ELABORADA 3
Sonidos prehispánicos | Aves de viento

PUNTO MEDIO
(Caracol)
Quetzalcóatl

9. NAHUATL IS GOOD | (She-Nahuatl)

El náhuatl es la expresión generosa de realidades significativas, interconectadas.

Tlaltecuhltli

Mictlantecuhltli

Xiuhtecúhtli

Huehuetéotl

El náhuatl convoca palabras, referentes visuales y significados en una cosmovisión insólita.

10. LOS DIOSES ANTIGUOS CONSTRUYERON CIVILIZACIONES

SECUENCIA ELABORADA 4
Aztec Drums of War | Wéwe & Huitsi

11. GLIFOS Y CÓDICES

Glifo: signo esculpido o símbolo pintado en un códice.

Los glifos mesoamericanos son representaciones visuales de fonemas, palabras o incluso frases enteras.

(She-Náhuatl)
tlacuilo

En Mesoamérica, la escritura y lectura de glifos era responsabilidad de mujeres y hombres especializados.

(Spirit of the Lakes)
**Los glifos mexicas son pinturas que se
leen.**

Un glifo común para indicar topónimos
nahuas es *altépetl*.

(She-Nahuatl)
altépetl

La primera lámina de la *Tira de la peregrinación* muestra un *altépetl* con un remate muy característico.

(She-Nahuatl)
Colhuácan

Quizá el glifo *Colhuacan* describe el rasgo de una montaña. O quizá la curvatura del glifo simboliza su esencia milagrosa.

En el centro del *altépetl*, una cueva. Ramas de abeto. El pico de un colibrí. Y adentro de todo, la cabeza parlante de un hombre.

Es el dios *Huitzilopóchtli*, instando a los aztecas a buscar el lugar indicado para que realicen su destino.

Al final de la *Tira de la peregrinación*, aparece de nuevo el glifo *Colhuacan*, pero sin la cueva mágica.

En esta lectura, *Colhuacan* no es un lugar mítico, sino un sitio ubicado en la cuenca de México. Su gobernante es *Coxcoxtli, El Faisán*.

En otras lecturas, los significantes gráficos presentes en los glifos no aluden a conceptos, sino que son indicadores fonéticos.

(She-Nahuatl)
Mexicaltzinco (primer énfasis)

**-tzin
tzintli**

Mexicaltzinco (otro énfasis)

Tzapotítlan es un pueblo devorado por el área metropolitana de la Ciudad de México.

(She-Nahuatl)
cuatzápotl

El Códice Mendocino ofrece una imagen imposible: un árbol feroz con las fauces abiertas. Un diente lo ancla a la tierra.

(She-Nahuatl)
**-tlan
tlantli**

Tzapotítlan

Así de extraño y hermético es el mundo prehispánico desde nuestra perspectiva contemporánea.

(Colibrí en flor roja)

Coyohuácan fue un puerto. Aquí Hernán Cortés, en 1521, preparó el ataque final contra Mexihco-Tenochtitlan: fue una batalla naval.

La primera opción para nombrar la estación de metro tomaba el nombre de una institución bancaria. Afortunadamente, un nuevo nombre surgió pronto.

Incluso si el centro de la antigua Coyoacán se encuentra a kilómetro y medio de la estación de metro, el topónimo nahua se impuso.

(She-Nahuatl)
Koyowákan

En los glifos mexicas, un coyote no debería confundirse con un lobo, un perro o un venado.

(She-Nahuatl)

cóyotl coyote

coyónqui hole

Tres decisiones de diseño modernizan el glifo. Al mirar hacia atrás, la cabeza del coyote equilibra la diagonal que divide la composición.

Unas piernas simplificadas y “estabilizadas” amarran la figura a un hipotético suelo.

La cola sedosa armoniza con sus dos curvas la imagen.

El escultor mexicano Gabriel Ponzarelli creó una escultura al mismo tiempo que se diseñaba el imagotipo.

La Cineteca Nacional está a cinco minutos caminando desde Metro Coyoacán.

La palabra *cóyotl* también aparece en otra estación de metro.

(She-Nahuatl)

Nezahualcóyotl

Nezahualcóyotl fue un gobernante Mexica. Poeta y arquitecto, construyó un dique para separar las aguas dulces y saladas en la cuenca de México.

Nezahualcóyotl también diseñó un acueducto para llevar agua potable a la isla de Mexihco-Tenochtitlan, desde Chapultepec.

Los códices mexicas unen la representación de una persona a un símbolo gráfico que evoca el nombre de esa persona.

(She-Nahuatl)

Los topónimos nahuas son poemas escritos.

Los glifos de los códices son poemas visuales.

12. TIRA DE LA PEREGRINACIÓN

SECUENCIA ELABORADA 5

Chocani | Nayeli Cortés

13. TEMPLOS (GUERREROS) MAYORES

Pedro Ramírez Vázquez diseñó increíbles museos de sitio; por ejemplo, en Teotihuacan.

El Templo Mayor es mi favorito. Aquí, en el corazón de la Ciudad de México, el arquitecto se inspiró en las pirámides gemelas: una tradición de mil quinientos años.

Templo Mayor es el museo más salvaje de Ramírez Vázquez. La mitad norte del edificio pertenece a Huitsilopóchtli: un dios solar.

Para la cúspide de este templo simbólico, el arquitecto mexicano estructuró un conjunto espectacular de vistas. Todas evocan el esplendor de la antigua y orgullosa Mexihco-Tenochtitlan. Y destacan la presencia impresionante de la actual Ciudad de México.

Al descender por la mitad sur del Museo del Templo Mayor, nos encontramos con Tláloc. Un dios húmedo, nocturno y misterioso.

Me gusta que este museo indómito presenta lo que nosotros –los mexicanos actuales– creemos saber acerca del periodo prehispánico. Y sin embargo, el museo evidencia los secretos que aún no conocemos.

El Museo del Templo Mayor está lleno de vida (y muerte). Y en un sentido muy real, este edificio es el último heredero de una tradición inaugurada hace mil años por los fieros guerreros de Tenayuca.

14. IMAGOTYPES & CDMX (TODAY)

SECUENCIA ELABORADA 6
Of Man and Wolf | Metallica

15. LA ÓPERA DE LOS TRES CENTAVOS (A LA MEXICANA)

Por construir.

16. LA CHINAMPA COMO CULTURA

17. CRÉDITOS