

New cultural centre opens at Tlatelolco Square, Mexico City

And third Mexican collector loans his art to university

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The National Autonomous University of Mexico, which operates a number of museums across Mexico City, has opened a new cultural centre at Tlatelolco Square in the northern part of the capital. The University Cultural Centre Tlatelolco contains a gallery devoted to a rotating display drawn from around 640 Mexican early modern works on long-term loan from the retired manufacturer Andrés Blaisten, 57, the first Mexican collector to enter into such a partnership with the publicly funded university.

His collection includes paintings by Diego Rivera and Rufino Tamayo, among many others. The centre inaugurated its temporary exhibition space in October with a survey of Mexican surrealist Maria Izquierdo that includes 26 works from the Blaisten collection. (The show closes on 20 April 2008 and then travels to Guadalajara and Monterrey in Mexico).

Tlatelolco is the square where an anti-government uprising took place in October 1968. It resulted in the massacre of hundreds of student protesters by soldiers ordered to quell the unrest on the eve of the Summer Olympics. The new centre contains a multimedia commemoration of the event that includes audio testimonies and new works by artists such as Francis Alÿs and Víctor Muñoz. Director Sergio Raúl Arroyo, former head of the National Institute of Anthropology and History, says the project is intended to revitalise the relatively poor and culturally deprived sector of the city.

Meanwhile, the university has also completed construction of a new contemporary art museum on its southern campus. It is the only institution in the city assembling a comprehensive collection of post-war Mexican art. The building, designed by architect Teodoro González de León, was unveiled last month, but the first exhibitions will not take place until next Spring.

o www.museoblaisten.com

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