

Nomination form
International Memory of the World Register

1.0 Checklist

Nominees may find the following checklist useful before sending the nomination form to the International Memory of the World Secretariat. The information provided in italics on the form is there for guidance only and should be deleted once the sections have been completed.

- Summary completed (section 1)
- Nomination and contact details completed (section 2)
- Declaration of Authority signed and dated (section 2)
- If this is a joint nomination, section 2 appropriately modified, and **all** Declarations of Authority obtained
- Documentary heritage identified (sections 3.1 – 3.3)
- History/provenance completed (section 3.4)
- Bibliography completed (section 3.5)
- Names, qualifications and contact details of up to three independent people or organizations recorded (section 3.6)
- Details of owner completed (section 4.1)
- Details of custodian – if different from owner – completed (section 4.2)
- Details of legal status completed (section 4.3)
- Details of accessibility completed (section 4.4)
- Details of copyright status completed (section 4.5)
- Evidence presented to support fulfilment of the criteria? (section 5)
- Additional information provided (section 6)
- Details of consultation with stakeholders completed (section 7)
- Assessment of risk completed (section 8)
- Summary of Preservation and Access Management Plan completed. If there is no formal Plan attach details about current and/or planned access, storage and custody arrangements (section 9)
- Any other information provided – if applicable (section 10)
- Suitable reproduction quality photographs identified to illustrate the documentary heritage. (300dpi, jpg format, full-colour preferred).
- Copyright permissions forms signed and attached. Agreement to propose item(s) for inclusion on the World Digital Library if inscribed

**Nomination form
International Memory of the World Register**

The archives of negatives, publications and documents of Manuel Álvarez Bravo

ID Code [2016-62]

1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

Manuel Álvarez Bravo (1902-2002), pioneer of artistic photography in Mexico and one of Latin America's emblematic photographers is considered one of the 20th Century's foremost representatives of world photography. The themes of his works allude to the human condition beyond the limits of geographical boundaries. His aesthetic, at the same time both classical and modern, was nourished by the cultural expressions of his native Mexico but he also explored cubism and the possibilities of abstract art too.

His work is included in many of the world's major photographic collections: Getty Museum in Los Angeles; MoMA in New York; George Eastman House in Rochester; Victoria and Albert Museum in London; National Library and Museum of Modern Art in Paris.

He left behind his archive of some 37,000 negatives, of which only about 10% was known. He also left an archive of publications and documents, testimonies and exercises in research and critique.

These materials had not been inventoried or carefully preserved, and this was what led in March 2005 to the foundation of the Manuel Álvarez Bravo Association. In November 2011, the Manuel Álvarez Bravo Archive was founded, to complement and strengthen the Association's efforts by providing services to the public.

2.1 Name of nominator

Archivo Manuel Álvarez Bravo, S.C.

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage: This organization owns and promotes the photographic and documentary archives of Manuel Álvarez Bravo

2.3 Contact person

Aurelia Shajna Álvarez Urbajtel, Director and legal representant of the ARCMAB

2.4 Contact details

Aurelia Shajna Álvarez Urbajtel	Cuadrante de San Francisco 78, col. Cuadrante de San Francisco, Delegación Coyoacán, CP 04320 México City, Mexico Telephone: (5255) 56 58 46 45 Email: asomab@gmail.com
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3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

If inscribed, the exact title and institution(s) to appear on the certificate should be given

***The archives of negatives, publications and documents of Manuel Álvarez Bravo
Archivo Manuel Álvarez Bravo, SC***

-37,249 negatives dating from the 1920s to 2001;

-1,688 publications

-3,257 documents belonging to or about Manuel Álvarez Bravo, from the 1920s to his death in 2002.

These materials are currently being scanned, catalogued and treated according to basic conservation standards, with progress to date being 80%.

3.4 History/provenance

All the materials form part of the photographer's personal archives, and are stored in the house where he spent the last forty years of his life.

4.0 Legal information

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Name: Archivo Manuel Álvarez Bravo, S.C	Address: Cuadrante de San Francisco 78, colonia Cuadrante de San Francisco, Delegación Coyoacán, CP 04320 México City, Mexico	
Telephone (5255) 56 58 46 45	Facsimile none	Email asomab@gmail.com

4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

Name: same	Address: same
Telephone: same	Email: same

4.3 Legal status:

The archive of negatives and publications is the property of ARCMAB (Archivo Manuel Álvarez Bravo S.C.), as affirmed in a donation contract agreed between Colette Urbajtel Erlich, the photographer's widow, and ARCMAB, represented by its director, Aurelia Shajna Álvarez Urbajtel, the photographer's daughter.

4.4 Accessibility:

MAB's archives are kept at two locations: the last home in which the photographer lived, now occupied by his widow, the president of ARCMAB; and at the home of the photographer's daughter, the director of ARCMAB. These locations are not open to the public, but are accessible through the web page www.manuelalvarezbravo.org. Consultations and requests are thus managed by email, and researchers are welcomed by appointment. We make no charge for our services, except in the case of exhibitions and the reproduction of MAB's works in publications (which remains free of charge for academic theses).

Access restrictions:

For the archives to be open to the public a bespoke space will be required, and we hope to turn his home into a Manuel Álvarez Bravo Museum in the near future.

4.5 Copyright status of the item(s) / collection:

Copyright and exhibition rights belong to ARCMAB. To ensure conservation of the materials ARCMAB charges for the reproduction of images. ARCMAB has also established tariffs for loans of, and to, exhibitions.

5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

5.1 Authenticity.

The negatives are original works by Manuel Álvarez Bravo; the publications are also originals which belonged to the photographer, as is the case with the documents too.

All of this is now the property of ARCMAB (Archivo Manuel Álvarez Bravo, S.C.) and is kept in its care.

All the documentary archives covered by this application are originals. From 1959 to 2012, they remained as MAB had left them, in the same house which MAB himself built and made his home in the south of Mexico City. The archives were collected, preserved and organized by MAB himself during the final decades of his life, and even earlier in the case of the oldest materials which date from the 1920s. Identification and provenance of them all is thus easily verifiable.

5.2 World significance

Álvarez Bravo's influence on the history of world art and photography cannot be overlooked. His works feature in any historical publication on world photography, and Mexican photography simply cannot be

conceived of without MAB's works.

Examples of his works are found in many of the world's major museums and collections, and MAB continues to be one of the Mexican authors whose works are most exhibited abroad.

Our archives are unique and irreplaceable, and their loss would impoverish humanity's cultural inheritance relating to the 20th Century.

MAB's photographic work (supported and complemented by the archives which are the subject of this application) has made a significant impact among art and photography experts, and among the general public in the Americas: Canada, United States, Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Ecuador, Colombia; in Europe: France, Spain, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Holland, Belgium, Poland; in Asia: Israel, India, China, Macao, Japan and Russia.

5.3 Comparative criteria:

1 Time

MAB's negatives are an artistic, cultural, historical and social testimony to most of the 20th Century in Mexico, illustrating both urban and rural Mexico. MAB's gaze gives a universal transcendence to the specificity of his country, alluding as it does to the condition of man and his surroundings. Indeed, it is this quality which makes the negatives a universal heritage.

The periodical publications record the parameters within which photography in Mexico and the world has been appreciated over time, starting with an analysis of MAB's own works. By the same token, the books and catalogues evidence the diversity of authors who have reflected on his oeuvre, plus the Mexican and international institutions whose exhibitions have enabled MAB's artistry to reach an extensive public across the world.

The documents make it possible to trace and describe the biography, chronology and avatars both of the artist himself and of his work, in time and space, setting Mexico within the panorama of world photography. Indeed, Álvarez Bravo himself is the identifier par excellence of Mexican photography within the greater world context.

2 Place

The negatives provide information about Mexico City from the 1920s to the 1990s, and about many of the numerous regions and population groups across the country. Prized among them is the celebrated exploration of the Selva Lacandona (Lacandon Jungle) in 1949, organized by Fernando Gamboa (deputy director of the National Institute of Fine Arts and a pioneer of museography in Mexico) which led to the discovery of the pre-Hispanic ruins of Bonampak, in Chiapas.

In MAB's photos there is testimony of archaeological sites, churches and convents of New Spain, rural landscapes and those cultivated by man. Many of these places have undergone considerable transformation or irreparable destruction, and this, in parallel to its artistic value, is how MAB's work makes an invaluable contribution to documenting and preserving the memory of Mexico as it used to be.

3 People

The documents reflect urban and rural Mexico from the 1920s to the 1990s, and portray various decisive stages in the country's industrial development: oil, cement, the development of education, urban and rural workers, to name but a few key aspects.

There are also various series on traditional festivals and the popular arts of Mexico's different regions, especially from the 1940s to the 1960s, and this is a part of our national heritage which in some instances has changed beyond all recognition or disappeared altogether.

The documentary works gather together materials relevant to MAB's work as editor and director of the *Fondo Editorial de la Plástica Mexicana*, the first publishing house in Mexico dedicated to disseminating Mexican art in all its diverse expressions, and which in a certain way took over from the pioneer magazine Mexican Folkways of the 1920s (published primarily for a foreign readership), the aim of which had been to illustrate and disseminate the cultural richness and complexity of Mexico.

Indeed, through his work, Álvarez Bravo was instrumental in persuading Mexico itself to value its precious multi-faceted inheritance.

The publications reflect both tradition and modernity in Mexico, from an objective and open-minded point of view as was that of their author, in a century and at a time when opposing forces fiercely challenged one another, and ideological or aesthetic postures were easily radicalized. This aspect is being strengthened by the systematization of MAB's documents currently taking place.

In sum, this archive of publications and images represents an invaluable and original testimony to the culture of Mexico for almost the entire 20th Century.

4 Subject and theme

MAB's works form part of the beginning of modern photography in the world, as well as being the start of MAB's own photography in Mexico. It bears witness to several key periods in the history of Mexican art.

MAB photographed the wealth of living indigenous cultures to be found the length and breadth of the country, which are simultaneously heirs of both pre-Hispanic Mexico and Colonial Mexico. He also captured the emergence of a mixed race, and the eruption of the Mexican Revolution. MAB also photographed modern architecture, the founding of the UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico) and the National Museum of Anthropology and History. Renowned visitors: André Breton, Sergei Eisenstein, Leon Trotsky, Katherine Anne Porter and Frances Toor posed to have MAB take portraits of them, as did many figures of the Mexican *intelligentsia*.

The publications provide a panorama of Mexico's culture through the eight decades covered by MAB's works. They include the author's own commentaries on his own oeuvre, the way in which he performed his art, the personages he knew and those who influenced him: Hugo Brehme, Eugène Atget, Tina Modotti, the Mexican muralists, the works of classical European engravers and painters, plus the photographic practices of his contemporaries in Mexico, the United States and Europe.

MAB even wrote about photography, which was rather unusual in Mexico amongst the photographers of his day.

In 1933, together with the Fernández Ledesma brothers, MAB presented the first historical exhibition on photography: "Retrospective Photography. The 19th Century". This was the first great historical photography exhibition held in Mexico, and indeed one of the first in the world, to assess the medium's first thirty years. MAB's interest in the medium's history and its dissemination found expression in the creation of two special collections for the appreciation of photography in Mexico: one he donated to the Museum of Modern Art, and the other he compiled for a Museum of Photography, sponsored by the company Televisa, which collection now constitutes the base of what are the photographic archives of Fundación Televisa (Televisa Foundation).

5 Form and style

In Mexico, Álvarez Bravo was not only a pioneer of artistic photography, but also the creator of photographic modernism. He is one of the medium's leading figures in Latin America. His works influenced the perspective of numerous authors in Mexico and the world, and in 1969 he made a personal impact on photographers taking a course he taught at the CUEC (University Centre for Cinematographic Studies). Graciela Iturbide (Hasselblad Award) was one of them.

MAB's work is based on so-called analogue photography, in impeccable black and white. He also experimented with colour, Polaroid, platinum and palladium prints (an illustration of this process is attached hereto: with photographs of Jain Kelly taken in 1976) and other techniques that preceded gelatin silver. At the same time he also explored a range of graphical techniques.

6 Social/ spiritual/ community significance:

MAB's works never fail to evoke an emotional response from viewers because of their poetic nature and sense of humour, and for many people the works also have an emotive value recalling a by-gone Mexico that is vanishing with time.

6.0 Contextual information

6.1 Rarity

The negatives are unique of their kind, as indeed are a significant number of the documents. Some publications are also valuable and rare.

6.2 Integrity

The materials of this archives form a unique whole. One of our main aims is to prevent existing materials from being damaged or dispersed.
