

Comment

This issue of the Review has unusual range. It begins with an article by Alma Guillermoprieto on the narcoculture in Mexico and concludes with an article by novelist Daniel Alarcón on fine dining in a new restaurant in Lima, Peru. Normally, a trendy restaurant is difficult to get into; this one is difficult to get out of. It's located in a Peruvian prison. No, the article is not fiction.

In between, Denise Dresser reflects on the violence gripping Mexico, the role of the Calderón government and the relation of the United States to these unfolding "drug wars." Ben Lessing examines the context of the drug trade and the efforts to control it in the wake of a visit by Ethan Nadelmann, founder of the Drug Policy Alliance.

An interview with Chilean President Ricardo Lagos (2000-06) highlights his new role as a special envoy on climate change appointed by the Secretary General of the United Nations. As part of the Center for Latin American Studies' new program on Alternative Energy and the Americas, President Lagos and I visited Detroit, Michigan to spend a day with scientist and renewable energy pioneer Stan Ovshinsky. Lagos shares his impressions of the trip in a second article that looks at the challenges for implementing renewable energy in the Americas. And, I conclude our environmental articles with a proposal for an Alliance for Green Prosperity in the Americas.

Robert Reich, Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration, examines the global economic

meltdown by probing the central question of whether we are in the midst of a severe cyclical downturn or a more fundamental structural transformation. The article is based on his opening remarks at the 2009 conference of the Progressive Governance Association in Viña del Mar, Chile.

Political tensions in Argentina and the ways in which that country is seeking to navigate turbulent economic waters are explored in an article by Roberto Guareschi, the former editor of Clarín, a leading Argentine daily. He focuses on the outsized role played by the ruling couple: Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, the current president, and Néstor Kirchner, who preceded her in office.

Finally, we are very pleased to showcase a striking new series of paintings by Fernando Botero

that takes the Mexican circus as its theme. Even in reproduction, they convey a richness of color and style as well as the special magic that runs through the work of this great artist. The entire series includes 120 oils and 200 drawings.

UCB Professor of History Thomas Laqueur reflects on Botero's choice to donate his extraordinary paintings and drawings on Abu Ghraib to the University of California, Berkeley. We are humbled by his generosity and feel there is no more appropriate home for these works than Berkeley, given the history and values of this campus.

Fernando Botero and Sophia Vari will join us for the opening at the Berkeley Art Museum on September 23, 2009. We look forward to seeing you there!

— Harley Shaiken

Harley Shaiken, Ricardo Lagos and Stan Ovshinsky together in Detroit in 2009.



Photo by Brendan Ross.