

# PEDRO FRIE DE BERG

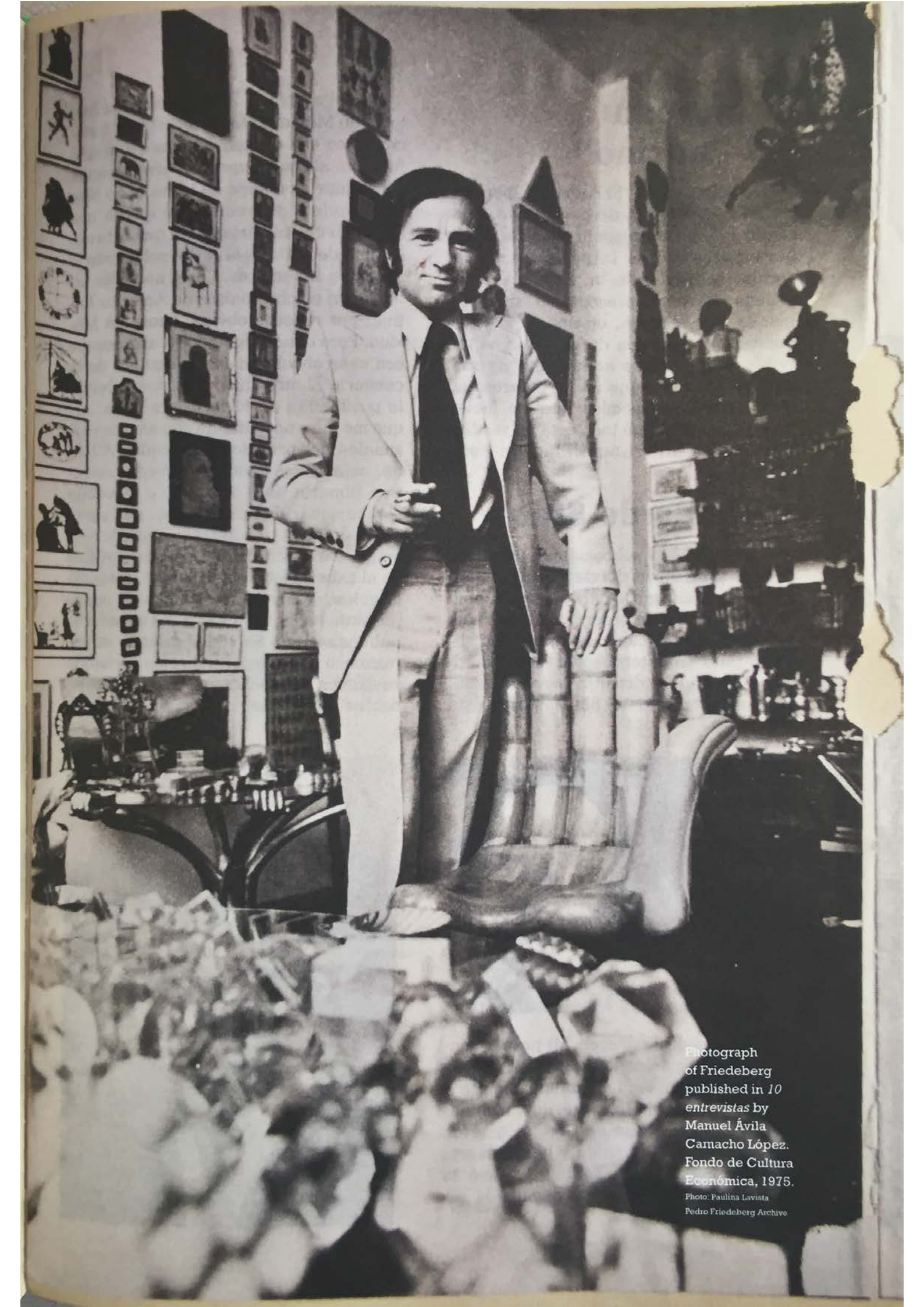


HANS ULRICH OBRIST Why do you speak so many languages?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG I was born in Italy, my mother was German, and we came to Mexico when World War II started. I was three years old and so I learned Spanish. Then I went to the American School and learned English, and then to Paris for two years, where I learned French. Very simple! *[laughs]*

HANS ULRICH OBRIST And you came to art through architecture?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG I studied architecture because my father wanted me to be an engineer. I was studying architecture at the Universidad Iberoamericana. I hated it until I slowly began to explore unconventional architectural drawings. Mathias Goeritz gave a three-hour class, very German Expressionist. There were fourteen students but I was the only one who spoke German, and Mathias and I used to make fun of everybody in German, since they couldn't understand us. I don't remember the name of the class; it was a class in which he taught the Bauhaus. Mathias used to say, "For tomorrow you have three blue sticks of six inches, and three red sticks of nine inches, and one round

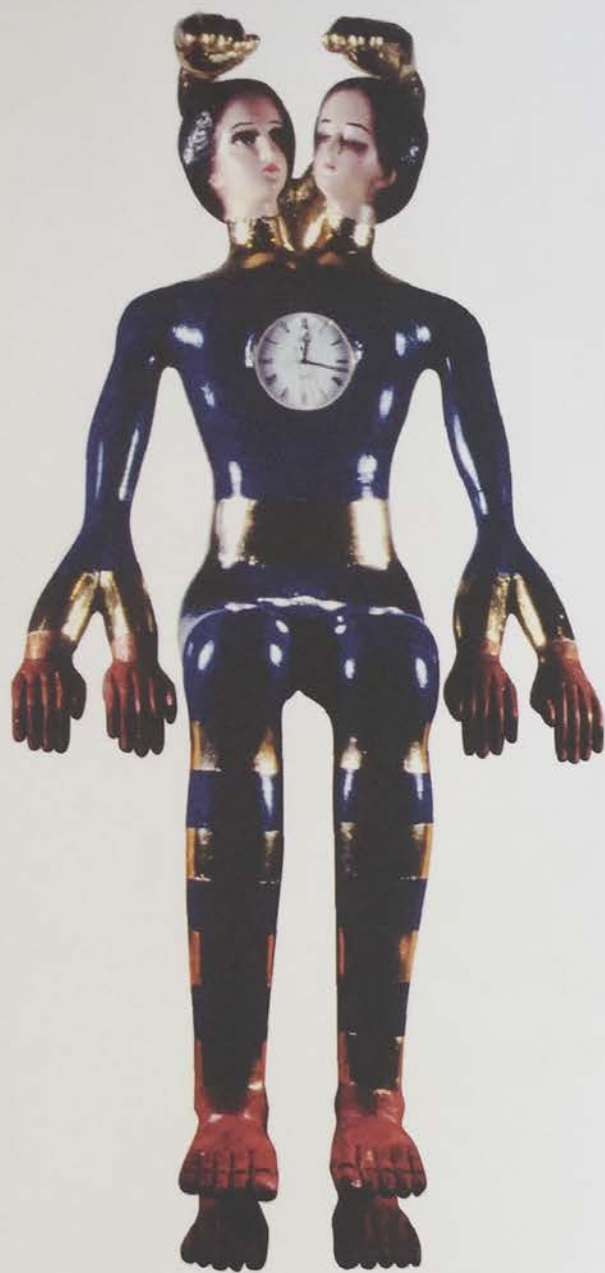


Photograph  
of Friedeberg  
published in *10  
entrevistas* by  
Manuel Ávila  
Camacho López.  
Fondo de Cultura  
Económica, 1975.

Photo: Paulina Lavista  
Pedro Friedeberg Archive



↑  
*Profeta  
desprestigiado  
(Unprestigious  
Prophet),  
1989, wood.  
CENIDIAP/INBA  
Photographic Archive*



↑  
*Ni yo me entiendo  
(Not Even I  
Understand Myself),  
1989, wood.  
CENIDIAP/INBA  
Photographic Archive*



disc, yellow, of so much. With those seven elements you have to express beauty, or ugliness, or whatever you want." It was very Kandinsky or something. *[laughs]*

One of his assignments was: "You are on a new planet and you have to design a totally new fork, knife, spoon, plate, and cup."

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** Both you and Goeritz cross disciplines with great ease.

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** I stopped studying architecture because I really didn't like it. I always admired and got along with Mathias because he was very well read, very cultivated. We became very good friends. I asked him if I could work for him, because I didn't have a job. I worked with him for about three or four months and we had a lot of fun. He had just finished designing El Eco, which is now a museum. And he had a lot of work to do because he was working with Barragán, who was building the towers of Satélite and a grave for an actress named Magda Donato. He and I painted a big abstract picture for Barragán's office. We put everything in it and then we went like this *[claps]* and had the dog make pipi on it. And we even poured Coca-Cola on it! In the end, the painting was somewhere between a Rothko and a Twombly or something else, *[laughs]* but not quite as good. Barragán loved it. Recently this painting turned up in a house that was being torn down on Calle Tokio. If you're from Mexico City, you would know that street. It's a miracle that this huge painting showed up in a 1950s house; I think they have rescued it and restored it.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** You began making architectural models under Goeritz's influence. Of course, they weren't models for functional buildings, but for imaginary structures.

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** No, no, my work is sometimes vaguely functional, like El Torreón del Espíritu Santo, the studio I designed for Edward James. Do you know Edward James?

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** Yes, of course; he was the English Surrealist who lived in Xilitla, San Luis Potosí, and designed Las Pozas (The Pools).

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** James was trying to do Surrealist architecture in Mexico, but there are many clichés about Surrealism, like, for example, stairs that lead to nowhere. He told me what he wanted and said he wanted to build it, but he didn't have much imagination in architecture. Do you know West Dean and his other house in England? They are poor imitations of Regency architecture.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** How did you meet him?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** In Leonora Carrington's house and in Kati Horna's. He came to Mexico City once or twice a year for a few years. Then a friend took him to Xilitla, which, even now, is eight hours by car, in the middle of the jungle.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** Was the brief really to build a functional structure in the middle of the jungle?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Yes. He commissioned me but he only paid me half. [laughs] El Torreón del Espíritu Santo was like an artichoke or a lotus flower; it was almost Victorian. It's like any building in New York with some flags and a few hands—very conventional, not at all Surrealist. Surrealist architecture is all crooked and crazy. It was a very simple plan because it was located in a very hot place on the coast of Mexico, and he wanted a studio upstairs that would be closed during the day, while at night it opened up and you could see the stars.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** Are these drawings for James's studio?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Yes. Does that look like Surrealist architecture? It's conventional! There are rooms and there are walls, a bathroom next door. Actually, Edwardian architecture is very functional; it's just that there are a lot of rooms, you know? I designed James's studio and a house for Mathias Goeritz and one for Ida Rodríguez.

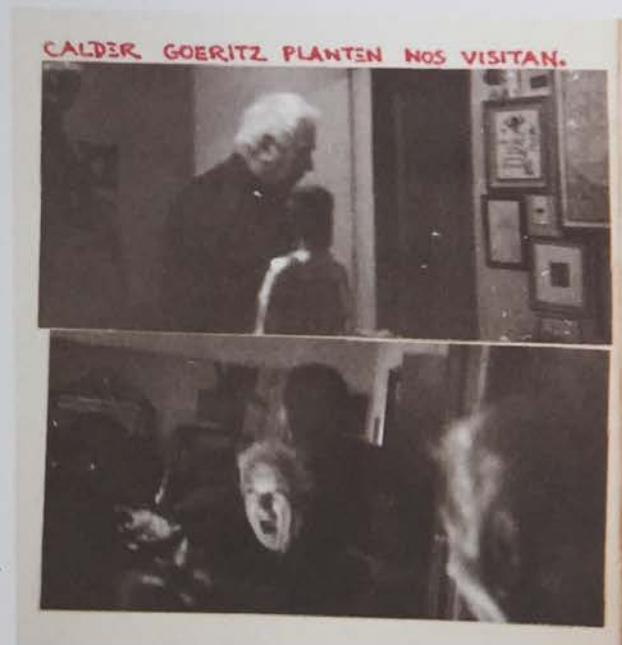
**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** And this is Ida Rodríguez's house?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Yes. The fun of Ida's house is that the rooms are named after things that are part of her private life. This house is like a lot of homes of German people in Mexico who made a lot of money in the 1900s. They built houses like Swiss chalets on what is now Avenida Revolución. You see, there used to be many houses even crazier than this one.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** Did you continue to work with Goeritz?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Not really, but in 1972 or so he invited me to go with him to Jerusalem and I was again sort of his secretary. Mathias went every year; he loved Israel and had many jobs there. He wanted Alexander Calder to do a sculpture for the Alejandro and Lilly Saltiel Community Center he was designing, but no one knew where to put it.<sup>1</sup> Calder, who was always drunk, had a bottle of whiskey and said, "I don't care where you put the stupid damn thing!" So we pretended that we were very seriously looking at the shapes and thinking of where to put it, but Jerusalem is very small, there weren't many places to put it, and it ended up in front of the Center. Mathias

.....  
<sup>1</sup> Alexander Calder, *Cow*, 1929. Steel wire, 16.5 x 40.7 x 10.5 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Alexander Calder and Mathias Goeritz in Friedeberg's apartment, Paseo de la Reforma, Mexico City, 1970. Photographer unknown. Pedro Friedeberg Archive

pretty much only wanted to be home with his girlfriend, he didn't want to be bothered with Calder, who was a very funny person, but not to be with twenty-four hours a day, you know? When we went to the bazaar, since Calder was drunk as usual, they immediately stole his wallet, but he didn't mind! And Mathias was too busy planning the Community Center; it's a seven-story Expressionist building, where they teach children classes of . . . I don't know what they teach them. [laughs]

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Who, besides Goeritz, are your heroes in architecture?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG My heroes, my heroes . . . my god, it could be Le Facteur Cheval or Simon Rodia. Do you know them?

Disculpe las molestias

# Genios conversando

←  
Gabriel Weisz,  
Kati Horna,  
Edward James,  
Leonora Carrington,  
and Friedeberg  
at the El Quid  
cabaret,  
Mexico City,  
August 1974.  
Photographer unknown  
Pedro Friedeberg Archive

←  
Portrait of  
Friedeberg,  
c. 1975.  
Photo: Daisy Ascher  
GENDIAP/INBA  
Photographic Archive

→  
Pedro Friedeberg  
interviewed by  
Mathias Goeritz  
for *Vogue México*,  
October 1980.  
Pedro Friedeberg Archive



**(O de cómo Mathías Goeritz entrevista  
-a cierta distancia- a Pedro Friedeberg)**

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cuando distancia  
conferencia e  
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HANS ULRICH OBRIST Yes, they're heroes.

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG Why do you know so much? I thought I was the one who knew the most! [laughs] Who else do I like? Gaudí, of course. Piranesi. *Quién más?* The French visionary architects: Étienne-Louis Boullée, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux . . . who is the other one?

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Jean-Jacques Lequeu. I still see the influence of architecture in what you do today.

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG I've always been fascinated by the Renaissance perspective, like Paolo Uccello and Andrea Mantegna, and I've been often to Vicenza to look at the Teatro Olimpico, and to Rome for the Borrominis and the Berninis.





*Proyecto para la remodelación de Toluca, 2006.*

Private Collection.

Photo: Trilce editórs

Private Collection

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** I can't look at a drawing of a city without thinking about some form of utopia; like, for example, your *Proyecto para la remodelación de Toluca*, which is a kind of imaginary city.

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Well, it's a cynical utopia, a cynical and sarcastic utopia, because Toluca is such an ugly city. It's unsaveable.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** Looking at your shapes and prints, I wonder if you've ever thought about doing wallpaper?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** I do love wallpaper, especially when it gets old and you can peel it off. There are some places in Mexico, like the Hacienda del Jaral de Berrio, near San Luis Potosí, where every room has wallpaper that's peeling off. The bottom ones are the best ones, because they're mostly hand painted or *intervenidos*. Some people have made scarves with my drawings, and there's a designer, Alejandra Quesada, who makes blouses and clothes, but those things don't pay. [laughs] It's a lot of work for me—or rather, it takes me a lot of time: I could be painting or sleeping



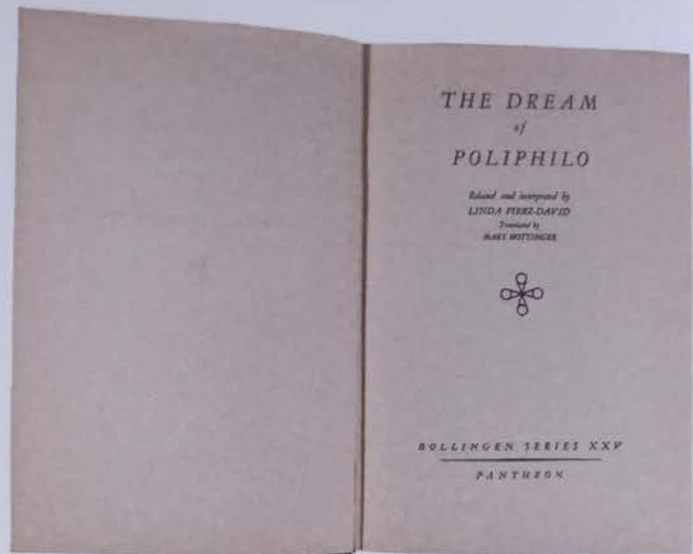
or, you know, eating tacos de cochinita pibil or drinking tequila, but instead I have to sit there and decide if we want to use an elephant or a rhinoceros or a snake in the pattern.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** Can you tell me about the amazing collection in your house?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Well, some things I inherited, but when I like something, I don't think much. I don't think much anyway. [laughs] Like the collection of Baedekers: this is the only complete collection in Mexico; they're from 1890 to 1914.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** And what about the eggs?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Well, these are by the Huichol. Do you know the Huichol? They're an indigenous group from northwestern Mexico; look what fine work they do. They're really worth collecting, but they're very expensive, like \$150 each. I don't think they're like any other eggs.



Cover and interior pages from *The Dream of Poliphilo* by Linda Fierz-David. Pantheon Books, New York, 1950.

Pedro Friedeberg Archive

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** Is this your library?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Well, it's my studio too, sometimes. My stamp collection is in here. Sometimes, when I like an image, I have a stamp or a seal made, but now it costs nearly two hundred pesos. I think that the found ones are much more interesting; some of them are from old businesses, like stagecoach businesses or Freemasons. This is a Freemason seal. I do the seals in a red wax. I like all the snakes and fish in different sizes. This one I made: it's a faucet; I made the little hands and the suns and the moons. There used to be a German stamp manufacturer called Casa Moser on Calle Palma. They went out of business because people don't use stamps anymore. They sold the stamps they had left for thirty centavos each, and I bought, like, five hundred.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** Much of your work seems to be a palimpsest.

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** It's like *Alice in Wonderland*, when she grows: she grows big and then she grows small. I've read that book many times. That makes things—how can I say it?—seem more logical. If you put the same thing several times and make it bigger and smaller.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** I think your illusion of space as well as your imaginary spaces would work perfectly on stage, and I see a book here by Diaghilev. Have you ever worked for the theater?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Only once—I did a little play with someone called Juan José Gurrola.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** And did you do anything for the opera?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Just a stage, like at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza—actually something very simple. We worked on an opera by Gian Carlo Menotti called *Amelia al ballo*, a very obscure little opera.



PEDRO FRIEDEBERG Those are the Pleiades. I was playing with the motif of seven, like the seven virtues, the seven sins. But each repetition gets bigger or smaller. It's like the very early films of Georges Méliès that are recreated today. Have you seen *Hugo*, the adaptation of Méliès's story?

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Yes, Scorsese's rediscovery of Méliès—another palimpsest. So this is the section on the Pleiades and this is literature. And what is this shelf?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG These are the books that belonged to my grandfather: German books, travel books.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Do you have books on the Kaballah?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG That's on the shelf with witchcraft. I also have a book on Hindu witchcraft. Helena Blavatsky, Paracelsus, Aleister Crowley . . . and all the works of Gurdjieff in one volume.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Gurdjieff's *All and Everything* is amazing. What's your favorite book in the entire library?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG My favorite book is the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. Do you know it? It's almost like *Alice in Wonderland*.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Written at the same time as the *Decameron*?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG About one century later, I think. My other favorites are the city guides that have plans and illustrations of great cities—there's one of Rome, one of London. You see? This is London in 1790; look, the city only reaches as far as this, but it was the second biggest city in the world at that time.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST And what about the skeleton hanging from the ceiling in the middle of your library?

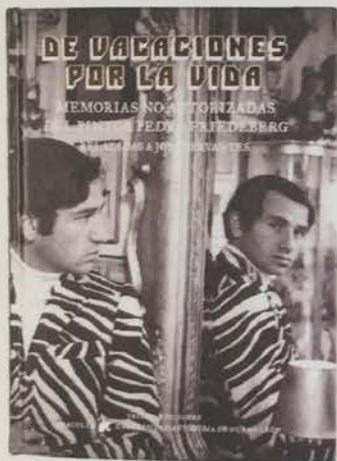
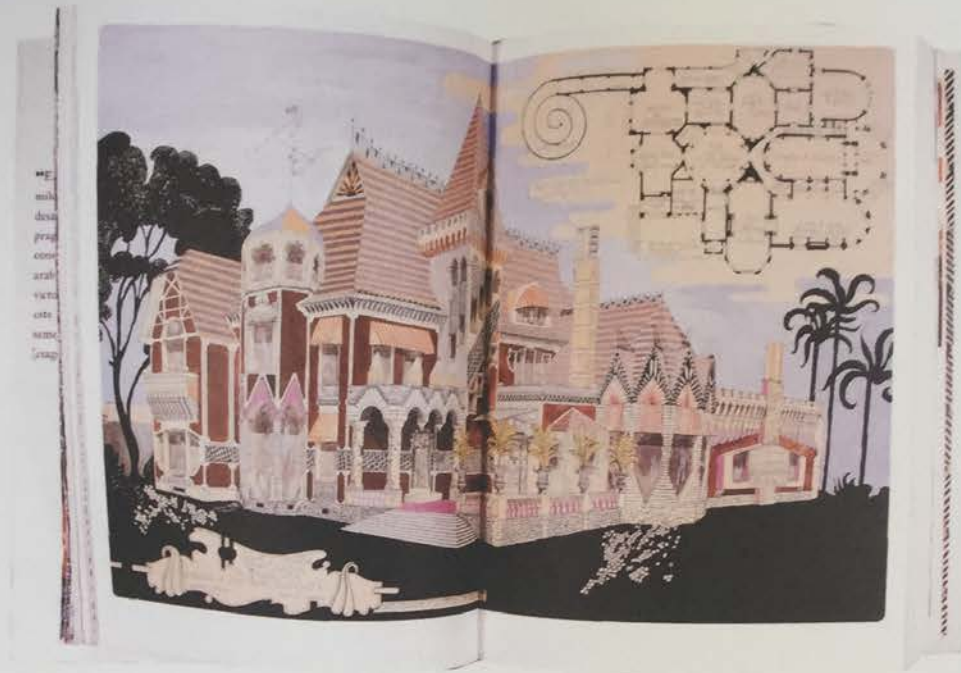
PEDRO FRIEDEBERG That's my grandmother. [laughs]

HANS ULRICH OBRIST You must always be looking out for things to add to your collection—or do things find you?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG Both. Most things find me. I like too many things, and I get confused, I get crazy. Here's a painting I made of a house made of lines out of love poems.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST It's exactly as I thought: books migrate into the paintings.

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG No one could have said it better. I did one picture with all the sonnets of Shakespeare on one canvas; it was a challenge to squeeze 154 sonnets in one page.



←← Cover and interior pages from *De vacaciones por la vida*. Trilce Ediciones, Conaculta and Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2011.  
Héctor Orozco Document Archive

↑↑ Cover and interior pages of *Pedro Friedeberg*, Trilce Ediciones, Conaculta and Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2009. The cover shows *Festival histórico en honor a los niños prodigio de Afganistán* (1968).  
Bruno Valasse Private Collection



HANS ULRICH OBRIST Is that work a collage?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG No, everything is painted. I never do collage; I think that's cheating. [laughs]

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Collage is cheating?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG My daughter does collage. [laughs] Sometimes I do the edge by hand first, the arounds, you know? How do you call it in English?

HANS ULRICH OBRIST It's called the mount.

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG In Spanish it's called the *marialuisa*. Then I start doing the insides but sometimes I don't like it as much as the mount. This one is like imaginary acupuncture mixed with Kabbalistic charlatanry. [laughs]

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Where would you say that your catalogue raisonné starts?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG I had my first show in 1959 at the Galería Diana in Mexico City, thanks to Walter Gruen, who was Remedios Varo's husband. I was working for him, selling records and tires, and studying architecture. One day, around 1957, Remedios asked me if I could draw a winding staircase for her, but in perspective. And then she said, "Oh, you do this very well, you should have a show with my friend Rosita Bal y Gay." Rosita was a Spanish refugee with one of the first galleries many years ago in Paseo de la Reforma, where the Torre Mayor is now.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST I read an article in the *New York Times* about your furniture. Aside from the Hand Chair you have many variations on the Butterfly Chair in the house.

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG Yes, after the Hand Chair I designed the Butterfly Chair, but that one was never as popular. There was a beautiful house in Mexico about ninety years ago that was left from the Art Nouveau period; it was called the Casa Requena. It belonged to a man who went to Europe around 1900 and came back with Art Nouveau ideas, which were the most modern at the time. He had a whole dining room with chairs that were flowers, and each was a different flower, which inspired my Butterfly Chair.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST When did you make your first piece of furniture?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG In 1961 there was a show that Mathias organized called *Los Hartos*, which, in English, means "fed up."<sup>2</sup> He asked me to design a table. I made a table with legs that were curved

.....  
2 *Los Hartos*. La Galería Antonio Souza, Mexico City 11/30–12/20/1961.

so that it looked like it was running away. I don't know where it is right now, but you couldn't sit down because the legs were very baroque. Of all the things I designed, the Hand Chair is the most popular; it's already in its third edition.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST You were part of Los Hartos?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG Los Hartos were Mathias, José Luis Cuevas, Chucho Reyes, and others. We were only ten or twelve people. Our manifesto declared, "We are fed up with the pretensions of modern art . . ."

HANS ULRICH OBRIST " . . . fed up with functionalism, fed up with the chaotic pornography of individualism . . ."

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG One of Los Hartos was a chicken, a chicken that laid an egg. When Alice Rahon, the painter, came to the opening, she was jealous because she hadn't been invited to join Los Hartos, so she took the egg and she smashed it on Mathias's head. [laughs] The funniest things happened, like when the most famous poet in Mexico, Guadalupe Amor, came to a meeting. She was wonderful—a real eccentric. She was super intelligent; she would just come in and scream and recite García Lorca.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Dada was clearly a big influence.

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG Mathias was very influenced by Dada. So, after that *Los Hartos* show, Mathias brought André Bloc to my house in Mexico. He loved the Hand Chair and had ten or twelve made in plaster and showed them in 1962 in his garden near Paris, in Meudon.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST André is a great hero of mine.

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG He died very shortly after that show. He fell from one of his pieces in Tehran.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST What was your connection to Pop art?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG The show was just before Pop art, I think; anyway, I always said Pop art was trash, which I still believe. [laughs] Mathias was very good friends with Leo Castelli, but Castelli never invited Mathias into his gallery. He was very disappointed, but Mathias's work was really more German Expressionist and not Pop enough.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST You think Pop art is trash?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG Once I went to New York around this time, and Philip Johnson asked me to his house. I came in and there were all these Brillo boxes everywhere. I said, "How good of you to





PASEO DE LA REFORMA 334-A... INAUGURACION: 22 de FEB. de 1968 A LAS 7<sup>PM</sup>. HASTA EL 13 DE MARZO

↑  
 Invitation for  
 Friedeberg  
 exhibition  
 at the Galeria  
 Antonio Souza,  
 Mexico City, 1968.  
 Pedro Friedeberg Archive

invite me, but what are you doing with all these Brillo boxes?" I kicked one of them and he was very angry. [laughs] He had bought them a day before!

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** Is that you in the leopard-skin suit? It's very sixties.

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** I wore it for a Happening. Nobody else in Mexico dressed up for exhibitions at that time.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** Have you ever written an autobiography?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Well, that one, where I claimed to be a chipmunk. My "unauthorized" memoirs are now published, but I'm not finished yet.<sup>3</sup> I'm waiting for many people to die so I can say horrible things about them, [laughs] because most of it is really just gossip. Most people say, you can't say that about somebody, that they shot their own mother and ate her brain or something like that, but if it happened, why can't you say it?

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** There was a very famous headline in a British newspaper in the eighties, about a comedian called Freddie Starr who ate a hamster. But why a chipmunk?

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Because a lady friend I had at that time said I looked like a chipmunk, before I had these teeth fixed. I used to

<sup>3</sup> Pedro Friedeberg and José Miguel Cervantes, *De vacaciones por la vida. Memorias no autorizadas del pintor Pedro Friedeberg: Relatadas a José Cervantes* (Mexico City: Conaculta, 2011).



write stupid things in the newspaper in the seventies and early eighties. [laughs]

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** I see this one says, "Local artist has been bitten by that bad man mania." That's the first line. I'm curious about the column "Lunario Perpetuo," which you wrote for the newspaper in 1984.

**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Yes. The newspaper was *El Universal*. Ida Rodríguez Prampolini was writing for the cultural supplement once a week and she asked me if I would write a column, and, since I never know how to say no, I said, "Yes, of course," thinking it would be very easy. So I wrote nine or maybe eleven columns, then there was an earthquake and the building of *El Universal* fell down, so that was finished, thank God! [laughs] But I wrote some very nice columns. For the first column I wrote about the dogs in Venice, all the famous dogs, like Peggy Guggenheim's dog and Marchesa Luisa Casati's dogs.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** Like a bestiary.

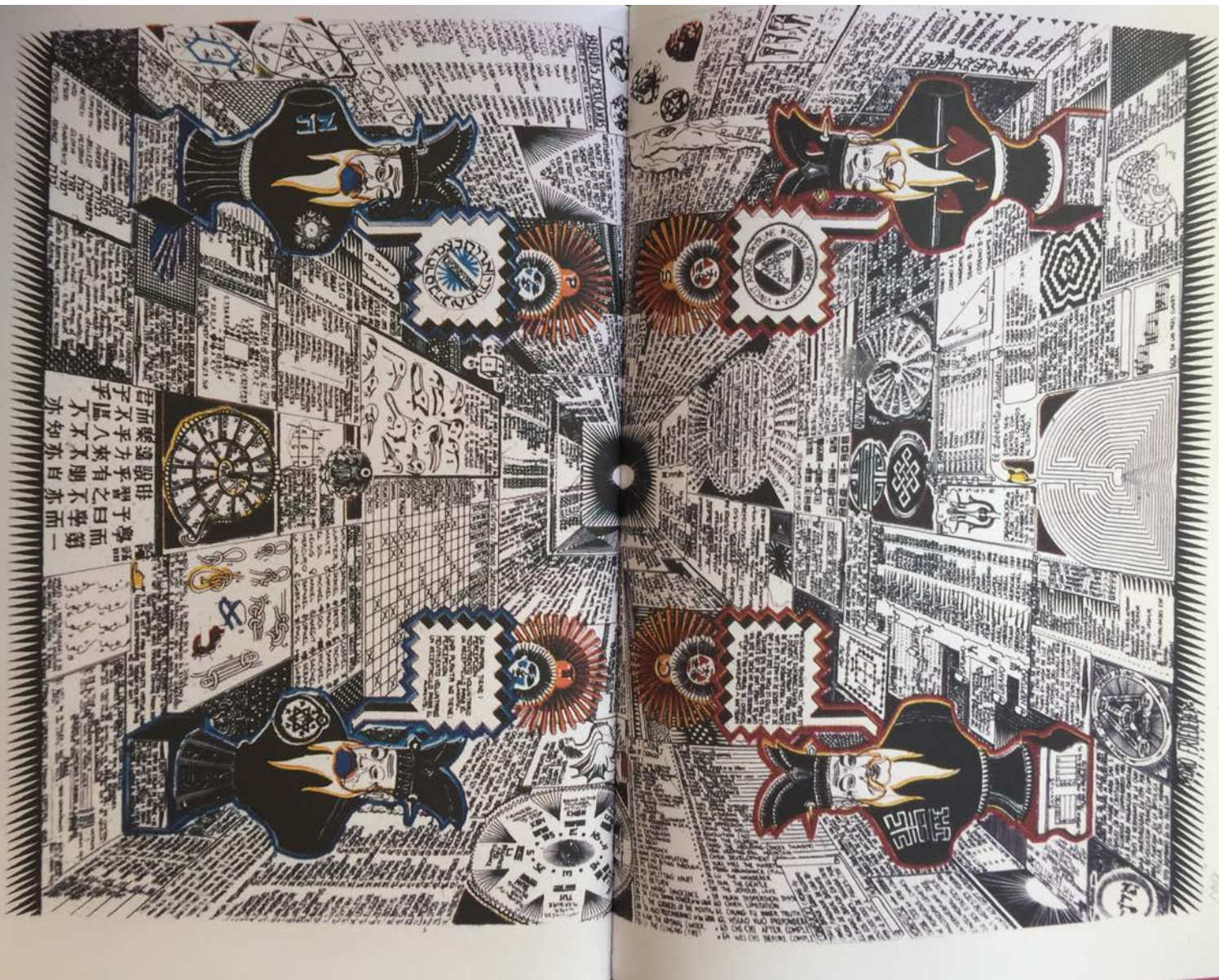
**PEDRO FRIEDEBERG** Yes, but this was only one column, with something like forty dogs. [laughs] And when I ran out of dogs I invented a few. The second column was about the cats of Salzburg or something like that.

**HANS ULRICH OBRIST** And why only animals?



*Silla mano con pie*  
(Hand Chair with  
Foot), n.d.

Pedro Friedeberg Archive



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PEDRO FRIEDEBERG I've always liked animals . . . I don't know. And animals are very easy to write about.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Leonora Carrington also loved animals.

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG Oh, she had a terrible little Yorkie called Baskerville, like the *Hound of the Baskervilles*. She was very good at naming dogs. Then she had a little poodle called Houdini and a cat named Atanasio Kircher.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Did you ever have a dog?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG Yes, I keep her ashes in an urn.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST What was her name?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG Her name was Magda Lupescu, but I called her Lupis. She could sit still for hours. Do you know who Magda Lupescu was?

HANS ULRICH OBRIST No.

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG Nobody knows Magda Lupescu. We had a real king living here in Mexico, King Carol II of Romania. When he was dethroned in 1940 and the Nazis kicked him out, he came with his wife Magda to live in Coyoacán. She was the daughter of some people who had the biggest department stores in Bucharest. [laughs] They were a Jewish family called Wolff, so they changed their name to Lupescu. She was very beautiful and she came with the king and they lived for two or three years in Mexico City. I saw them many times. I was on Calle Francisco Sosa with a German architect called Max Cetto, and next door lived the German writer Gustav Regler; the king lived across the street from us. Whenever he would come out, like at twelve o'clock every day, the maids used to say, "¡Ya va a salir el rey, ya va a salir el rey!"—The king is coming out! The king is coming out!, and every day we came out to the fence and stared. He was just a gentleman wearing something like a blazer crossed with a lady's black veil. He and his wife were probably driving downtown with a chauffeur, because Coyoacán was like a village then. After two years they got bored with Mexico—in fact, I think Mexican society got bored with them, so they moved to Brazil and then they died in Estoril, Portugal, like so many other kings. End of story.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST John Baldessari has a dog called Goya and another dog called Giacometti—a very thin dog. [laughs] Do you write poetry as well?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG No, to write poetry is somehow very . . . pathetic, right? [laughs] Actually, there are many good poets. I read

Spanish Baroque poets, like Góngora and Quevedo, and you don't understand too much, but it's beautiful.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Do you have other heroes in poetry?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG In poetry? Christian Morgenstern. [laughs]

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Wow, I love it! A writer of my childhood. I think this is the first time ever that someone out of the German-Swiss context has mentioned Morgenstern to me. [laughs] Speaking of poets, Rainer Maria Rilke wrote *Letters to a Young Poet*; I was wondering, what would your advice be for young artists today?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG Never to go to a museum of modern art. [laughs] They are poison. You see so many attractive things, and you get influenced. Like when Conceptual art began, it spread like an illness, like an epidemic.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Will your house become a museum?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG In Mexico? I doubt it. Somebody would steal it and it would be *clausurado*. That's what I love about Mexico: you can't trust anything or anybody.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST Which artists are you close to now? Chucho Reyes and Goeritz have died. Who are your friends in Mexico City?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG I like society people because they are stupid and you can talk about how the traffic is so bad, the servants are so mean, and the soufflé isn't good. [laughs] You don't have to think!

HANS ULRICH OBRIST That's perfect! You said that, "El mundo de hoy en día permite absolutamente todo, entre más estúpido y banal, más aplaudido"—The world today allows absolutely everything; the more stupid and more banal it is, the more people applaud it. You were part of an avant-garde movement, which was sort of neo-Dada; do you think there's still the possibility of an avant-garde?

PEDRO FRIEDEBERG No. Well, that's the point of it nowadays—there can be no avant-garde because everything has been done. Maybe you could do something very pornographic; in Pop that has been done. So the only solution would be to go back in time; some people go back to the Stone Age, like when Bellini wrote *Norma*. All the historical styles have been used. It's like Las Vegas; have you ever been to Las Vegas? There's a Gothic hotel, there's a Renaissance hotel, there's a Venetian hotel—there's nothing left! There's a Mexican pyramid in the lobby of a hotel. It's like late Victorian; there's nothing left to copy. ●