

TORRIJOS: EL HOMBRE Y EL MITO/ THE MAN AND THE MYTH

Photographs by Graciela Iturbide

Essays by Gabriel García Márquez and Graciela Iturbide

CONTACT

Ashely Singley

Umbrage Books

111 Front Street, Suite 208 Brooklyn, NY 11201

(212) 796 2707

ashley@umbragebooks.com

BOOK SPECS

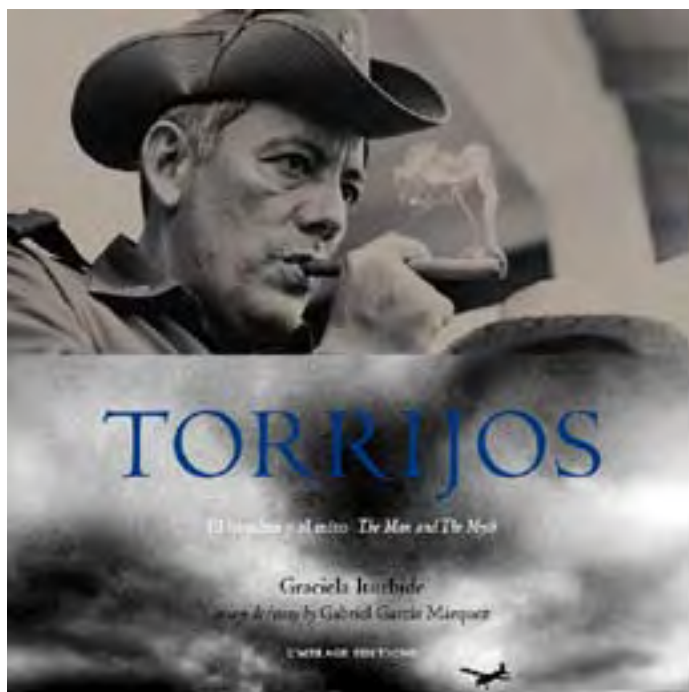
- Bilingual English & Spanish
- 9 x 9 in., 112pp.
- Hardcover with jacket
- 70 B+W Photographs
- February 2008
- ISBN: 978-1-884167-68-3
- US \$40.00

In the annals of Latin American politics, Omar Torrijos of Panama was a David against Goliath, a charismatic leader who challenged the landed rabiblanco ("white tails") oligarchy, redistributed land and wealth, and died tragically in a 1981 plane crash widely rumored to be the work of the CIA.

The Torrijos legend is of a man of action, yet an introspective thinker. Known for macho swagger: "They will find us standing or dead, but never on our knees!", he is also remembered for the poetic, even romantic: "He who gives love, receives love."

This is a unique, intensely personal homage to Torrijos by two giant talents, the great Mexican photographer Graciela Iturbide, who befriended Torrijos in the 1970s and photographed this period of social upheaval in Panama, and the Nobel Prize-winning Columbian writer García Márquez. It shows Torrijos in never-before-published photographs and never-before-told personal reminiscences, offering up candles of memory. Márquez describes a moody, lonely president drinking whiskey all night, and in pre-dawn, summoning one of six different women he had relationships with to keep away the demons.

This homage by two friends is meant as a corrective to history. Hardly a dictator who silenced opposition, closed the media, ran up debt, and turned a blind eye to corruption, instead they argue for Torrijos as a flawed hero in the footsteps of Simon Bolivar: the first Panamanian leader to advocate for the majority population—the poor and mestizo (indigenous, Hispanic, and African), an innovator who opened schools and job opportunities for the less fortunate, initiating wide-ranging social and economic reforms. But his greatest legacy and gift to his people was the Canal Treaty, signed with President Carter in 1977, giving the people of Panama Control over the "big ditch."



With Torrijos' son Martin now wearing his father's mantle as the young and dynamic president of Panama, the circle of history is complete. This is a memoir of love and redemption about a man ahead of his time, told with power and pathos.

The Colombian-born writer Gabriel García Márquez is winner of the 1982 Nobel Prize, winning international fame with his masterpiece, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a defining classic of twentieth-century literature. His many novels create a world of great beauty and great cruelty, where love brings both redemption and enslavement, and where the lines between objective reality and dreams are hopelessly blurred.

Graciela Iturbide studied filmmaking and still photography at the Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México from 1969-1972 and apprenticed with Manuel Álvarez Bravo in 1970-1971. Solo exhibitions of her work have been held around the world, including OMC Gallery for Contemporary Art, Düsseldorf; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Robert Miller Gallery, New York; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterey, Mexico; and Casa del Lago, New Mexico. She is the recipient of a Eugene Smith Grant in Humanistic Photography (1987) and a Guggenheim Fellowship (1988) and is one of Latin America's major artists. She is the author of three books and many catalogues. She lives in Mexico City.

IMAGES (FROM TOP LEFT, CLOCKWISE): 1. EL CHORILLO, PANAMA, 1975 2. GENERAL TORRIJOS ON ONE OF HIS VISITS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE IN PANAMA, 1975. 3. GUAYMI WOMAN, 1974. 4. PANAMA, 1982 5. GENERAL TORRIJOS "...USED TO THINK WHILE WALKING THROUGH THE COUNTRYSIDE."

