

Mexican woman achieves worldwide recognition for documentary photo



The Guardian, a leading British newspaper, named one of her photos among the six most impactful images worldwide in 2025.

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Sandra Hernández, a photographer and professor from the [Tec's Querétaro campus](#), has been recognized by the British newspaper [The Guardian](#) for her visual work "***Surviving the Impossible***".

The newspaper, which named the Tec professor's photo as one of the six most impactful, highlighted the **visual power and narrative content** of the image that documents **everyday life in Cuba**.

This image is part of a project that portrays the **daily challenges** faced by Cubans from a **close and human perspective**, documenting the everyday life of

resistance, solidarity, and dignity.

“Rather than talking about poverty or misfortune, this project aims to honor the resilience and strength of community life”, said the professor.

The featured photograph was initially published in **The Guardian’s [Women Behind the Lens](#) section in early 2025**. It was later selected as one of the **most impactful photos of that year, according to The Guardian**.



Children playing in the streets of Cuba. Photo: Sandra Hernández

From living in Cuba to international recognition

Sandra Hernández, also known as [Vita Flumen](#), began working on **this project in 2022 in Cuba**, where she lived and created her photography project alongside the local population.

“Photography allows us to see different realities and stories that are foreign to us”, said the professor.

The **title of her work** comes from a quote by **Cuban writer and poet Reinaldo Arenas**: *“There is only one place to live, the impossible”*, in which the professor sought to **portray reality without clichés**, showing it from a **human perspective** and taking into account all the **nuances of the situation**.

“In this impossible place, there is joy, sadness, deprivation, mutual support, and listening. This is what I wanted to show in the project”, said the photographer.

The professor managed to **capture reality** in her work from a **human perspective, and the experience** she has gained from this and other **projects has made an impact** in the classroom.

“Having my work published in this newspaper is more than a dream come true; it is a pat on the back that encourages me to continue, as I can see that what I’m doing has an impact”, she reflected.



Inside Peña Semilla Nueva, where the community gathers to share their life experiences through art. Photo: Sandra Hernández

Photography as a means of communication and teaching

Holding this desire since childhood, Sandra Hernández **began photography** as a hobby. She saw the potential of sharing stories through the universal language of **images**.

Focusing on **gender and human rights issues** in universal situations and guided by her personal experiences, she began **taking photographs** with the philosophy of **conveying feelings** beyond the merely aesthetic.

Sandra Hernández, photographer and professor at Tec de Monterrey Campus Querétaro. Photo: Sandra Hernández



“Images don’t have to be perfect to be good; they must communicate and make you feel, and sometimes that virtue lies in imperfection”, says the photographer.

As an educator, Hernández aims to share her **experiences with her students**, teaching them to look beyond what **books and technical knowledge** can offer, enriching the classroom.

The professor described it this way: *“Books and knowledge help us with the technical part, but we have to work on the human part ourselves”.*

“Photography has been with me all my life. I’ve always liked telling stories”. - Sandra Hernández

From the streets of Cuba to the Tec

Héctor Falcón Villa, Director of the **School of Humanities and Education**, highlighted the relevance of the professor’s achievement for the community: *“We’re very proud of the professor’s achievement, and she is undoubtedly a very inspiring figure for both our students and the rest of our faculty”*.

Professor Hernández’s **international recognition** reinforces the value of her career and the impact of her work inside and outside the classroom. Her **vocation, sensitivity, and experience** are directly reflected in the training of her students, whom she invites to look beyond the image.

“This distinction makes her a very inspiring figure for our students and reflects her great quality as a professional photographer”, added Falcón, who pointed out the **importance of learning from her vision and professional career**.

Family in the inner courtyard of a house in Cuba. Photo: Sandra Hernández



Finally, the director highlighted the professor's formative role in the classroom: *"I would ask my students to make the most of Sandra's wisdom, experience, and sensitivity"*.

These qualities allow her students to learn beyond technique, with a critical and human perspective on different realities.

Through ***Surviving the Impossible***, Sandra Hernández aims to reaffirm the power of **photography as a tool** for **storytelling** based on empathy and respect.

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