"A Shadow Born of Earth:

New Photography in Mexico"

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Mexican photography featured in new exhibits

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art begins the new year with two exhibitions that recognize Mexico’s vitality in the art of photography and the prominent role of photography in Mexican art since the early part of this century.

The exhibitions will run through Feb. 20 after an opening reception, free for the public, from 3 to 5 p.m. Jan. 16.

The exhibit, “Contemporary Mexican Photography,” features the work of 35 Mexican photographers and spans three generations. Ninety works document the complex mixture of traditions and beliefs that makes up the Mexican culture today.

“The richness and diversity of the Mexican people and their culture is captured eloquently by contemporary Mexican photographers,” said Anne Tucker, curator of photography for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and curator of the exhibition.

“This exhibition presents an opportunity to showcase their distinct style, which has evolved from a mixture of cultural influences and from a strong and internationally recognized literary and artistic heritage,” she said.

Organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the exhibition is made possible by Target Stores and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

“A Shadow Born of Earth: New Photography in Mexico,” is the first comprehensive survey of the work of the new generation of Mexican photographers to be presented in this country.

While the “Contemporary” exhibition traces the work of the widely known and admired pioneer photographers such as Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Ignacio Lopez, Mariana Yampolsky, Victor Flores Olera and Pedro Meyer, “A Shadow Born of Earth” surveys the work of current Mexican photographers such as Laura Cohen, Pablo Ortiz Monasterio, Gerardo Suter and Eugenia Vargas.

Included in the exhibit, and on this week’s FOCUS cover, is work by self-taught photographer Adolpho Patiño, a founder of Fotografos Independientes and Peyote y Compania. Shown is one of the four panels of “Constant Navigation,” in which the artist repeats images of himself and his brother as boys. The quadruply is from the series “Elements for Navigation,” from the larger series “Relics of the Artist.”

Curated by Elizabeth Ferrer, an independent curator and critic specializing in Latin American art and photography, the exhibition features 77 recent works by 16 photographers, many of them under the age of 40.

The work of this new generation is grounded in the strong Mexican tradition of socially aware black and white photography. However, the experimental approaches of the current generation gives new meaning to the art form of photography in the context of contemporary Mexican society.

“A Shadow Born of Earth” is organized and circulated by The American Foundation of the Arts. It is sponsored by a grant from Professional Imagery, Eastman Kodak Company. Additional support has been provided by the Benefactors Circle of The AFA.

The exhibition is free and open to the public.

The museum, located at 410 W. Boyd St., is open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday and from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

For more information or to make arrangements for group tours, or to arrange accommodation on the basis of disability, call 325-3272.