



## **Chapultepec is Ready to Address the Present and Face the Future: Orozco**

The coordinator of the park's rehabilitation project says, "investing in environmental culture is essential for the future of art."

Chapultepec Park is ready to address the present and face the future, stated Veracruz-born artist Gabriel Orozco in an interview with *La Jornada*. Orozco recently concluded his role as the coordinator of the Chapultepec: Nature and Culture project, whose newly renovated fourth section was inaugurated a few days ago.

The iconic green space of Mexico City "is much better prepared (to welcome visitors), because it was stuck. The future of the third section was unclear, and we couldn't envision a future for the fourth section as we do now. The first and second sections were more or less on track, although work was still needed in the second, but now they have a forward-looking projection, particularly with the creation of the Environmental Culture Center and the gardens that have been planted.

"The third and fourth sections, with soil planting, fertilization, and the creation of new access points and pathways, in addition to new installations, are no longer static, stagnant, or isolated from the flow of history and the surrounding community or visitors."

"The future is promising because people can now enjoy the trees, paths, open air, and a variety of activities, both cultural and family-oriented. Chapultepec is on track to become a vast cultural and environmental campus for people to enjoy. Instead of the forest being neglected, we've revitalized it. It was very dry, especially in the third section, and there were fires. Hopefully, that won't happen again. Previously abandoned areas are now accessible. So yes, it's ready for a better future," he explained.

Appointed at the start of the current administration to coordinate one of its priority initiatives, Orozco emphasized that the more than 10 thousand 500 million pesos (577 million US dollars) allocated to the project "is a relatively low investment" for the benefits it will bring.

"Compared to the cost of remodeling another cultural center in the world, such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the costs and benefits per square meter, as well as in environmental terms, it's a very productive investment. It's not easy for many people in the cultural world to understand that investing in ecological or environmental culture, in soil planting and fertilization, is just as important—if not more so—for the future of art. In our youth, political art aimed to speak of a better future; today, it's impossible to think of political art without considering the environment. One of the political responsibilities of art is its commitment to environmental culture and climate change," he asserted.

"My work has long been deeply involved with ecological themes. I hope Chapultepec, as a public space and a piece of public art, now generates a message of ecological awareness, environmental policy, and ecological cultural policy."

One aspect of the original project's master plan that wasn't realized, Orozco noted, was a tunnel-bridge that would connect the third and fourth sections of the forest for pedestrians, as well as the contemporary art pavilion planned for the first section. The pavilion faced public criticism from some sectors, who viewed it as a personal indulgence, leading to its eventual cancellation.

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He clarified that the recently inaugurated Line 3 of the Cablebús (Cablecar), a 5.5-kilometer route that connects all four sections of Chapultepec, was initially not part of the project but was integrated as part of the city's broader mobility strategy.

"The master plan included a tunnel-bridge to cross from the third to the fourth section because it was important to ensure accessibility. Work on that accessibility will still be needed, especially with the influx of visitors to the fourth section. In our studies, we predict it will be the second most visited area after the first section. So, that bridge or access point will need to be implemented. We had several proposals for that."

"The Cablebús is spectacular, very beautiful, and I think people will use it a lot. Demand will surely grow, but the project is designed to expand. The master plan is structured so that the projects we couldn't finish in this first phase can continue, grow, and demand further development of access points, interconnections, maintenance, and other elements. For now, to complete this phase of the project, we're in a good place."

Considering the most internationally renowned Mexican artist, Orozco explained that the contemporary pavilion in the first section aimed to "better connect" the museums in the area and create a cultural circuit with those institutions.

"It wasn't going to be some 'personal museum'; the pavilion was a space for the contemporary arts of Mexico, which now have an international presence. One of Mexico's contemporary attractions is art. So, having this museum walk—from the National Museum of Anthropology to contemporary art museums, passing through the Chapultepec Castle, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Tamayo Museum—would create a broad, rich, historical, and artistic journey."

He noted that the space couldn't be realized due to "somewhat absurd" political reasons. Now that the results of the other nodes are visible, perhaps it can be understood that it wasn't a bad idea: "It wasn't going to be the 'Egobriel' Orozco Museum," he finished with a laugh.