

SYNOPSIS: BLOSSOMS OF FIRE

One-Line Synopsis

Blossoms of Fire is a dazzling, whirling dance of a film that celebrates the extraordinary lives of the Isthmus Zapotecs of southern Oaxaca, Mexico, whose strong work ethic and fierce independent streak rooted in their culture, have resulted not only in powerful women but also in the region's progressive politics and their unusual tolerance of alternative gender roles.

One Paragraph Synopsis

Blossoms of Fire shows the Zapotec women of southern Oaxaca, Mexico in all their brightly colored, opinionated glory as they run their own businesses, embroider their signature fiery blossoms on clothing and comment with angry humor on articles in the foreign press that flippantly and inaccurately depict them as a promiscuous matriarchy. The people interviewed in this film share a strong work ethic and fierce independent streak rooted in Zapotec culture. These qualities have resulted not only in powerful women but also in the region's progressive politics, manifested in their unusual tolerance of alternative gender roles.

Synopsis

Author Elena Poniatowska described the legendary women of Juchitán, a city in Oaxaca, Mexico, as “guardians of men, distributors of food.” Artists like Miguel Covarrubias and Frida Kahlo celebrated their beauty and intelligence. *Blossoms of Fire* shows them in all their brightly colored, opinionated glory as they run their own businesses, embroider their signature fiery blossoms on clothing and comment with angry humor on articles in the foreign press that flippantly and inaccurately depict them as a promiscuous matriarchy. The people interviewed in this film share a strong work ethic and fierce independent streak rooted in Zapotec culture. These qualities have resulted not only in powerful women but also in the region's progressive politics, manifested in their unusual tolerance of homosexuality. Veteran film editor and former Les Blank collaborator Maureen Gosling and codirector Ellen Osborne illuminate the infectious self-confidence of the Juchitecan people. A midwife laughs over a young husband's behavior during birth, a gay man cheerfully asserts that “the mom's in charge” in Juchitecan society and many proudly describe the challenges they face in their work and their families. Their lives may be hard, and maintaining Zapotec culture and language may be an ongoing battle, but it's plain that not one of these individuals —man, woman, young, old, gay or straight— would willingly change places with anyone in the first world. —*Pam Troy, San Francisco International Film Festival*

Additional notes: *Blossoms of Fire* was made over a period of ten years. It was shot and edited entirely on 16mm film. The film is Maureen Gosling's debut as a Producer/ Director after being an editor, and Co-Filmmaker with documentarian Les Blank for twenty years. (see Bio for more details.)