

Mexican journalist Elena Poniatowska to be a UCSD Regents Lecturer May 3-16

May 1, 1992

Contact: Marta Sanchez, Department of Literature, 534-3210 or Alixandra Williams, 534-3120

MEXICAN JOURNALIST ELENA PONIATOWSKA TO BE A UCSD REGENTS LECTURER

Elena Poniatowska, one of Latin America's foremost fiction writers and journalists, will be a Regents Lecturer in the Department of Literature, May 3-16.

She will give a public lecture, "Cultural Trends in Contemporary Mexico," at 7 p.m. May 14, in the Robinson Auditorium of the UCSD Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies. The lecture is to be delivered in English, is free and open to the public.

Poniatowska has worked for the Mexico City newspapers Excelsior and Novedades. In 1978, she won the Mexican National Journalism Prize for interviewing. She is best known for her documentary and testimonial fiction.

Critics have said that Poniatowska interweaves political denunciation and social awareness with sophisticated narrative techniques and journalistic reportage to create a complex picture of power relations, social class and gender identity.

Among Poniatowska's best-known works are, "Nada, nadie," ("Nothing, nobody"); "Tinísima" (1991, based on the life of contemporary Italian photographer Tina Modotti); "La Flor de Lis" (1988, an autobiographical novel) and "Fuerte es el silencio" ("Silence is Strong" 1980).

In another work, "La noche de Tlatelolco" (1971, translated as "Massacre in Mexico" in 1975 and 1992), her account of witnesses to a bloody massacre was her answer to the silence of the government and the press on a dire moment in Mexican history. (In 1968, government troops attacked hundreds of unarmed civilians, many of them students, at a rally in the Plaza de Tlatelolco.) The book continues to receive critical acclaim.

Its publication, critics said, marked the arrival of an original voice in contemporary Mexican narrative.

Poniatowska was born in Paris in 1932 to a French-Polish American father and a Mexican mother (Paula de Amor). She moved to Mexico City with her mother and sister in 1941, escaping the German occupation of France. Her father remained in Europe to serve in the armed forces during World War II. Poniatowska attended college in Pennsylvania and later began work with a Mexican newspaper.

Poniatowska has lectured in the United States and Latin America. She has taught at Middlebury College in Vermont, and at UC Davis. During her two weeks at UCSD, she will teach a mini-seminar in Mexican literature, and be available for consultation and interviews. For information call 534-3210.

(May 1, 1992)