

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

Department of Photography

May 15, 1966.

Nell dear:

Many thanks for sharing your joy with me! I can well imagine that "Villa Serena" is having some of its highest hours, and I know that it must be wonderful for Chris to have you during this time of readjustment, just as you find him more beautiful than ever. I am so grateful to you for the news and the enclosure, which is indeed awesome.

I have a tidbit for you and for Chris. You have often heard me speak of the Swedish photographer, Lennart Olson. Well, he is presently filming in your Mexican Village (small world department). He writes me from the Hotel Monte Alban, in Oaxaca, where he is working on two films:

"After a very slow start our work is now proceeding well. We went to see many places before I decided to make all the three documentaries from the State of Oaxaca. We are now working in a village which has become famous for weaving fine sarapes. Many americans are coming there and buy sarapes very cheap. Teotitlan del Valle is a village in the very beginning of a transformation from old to modern. A change that will probably kill the superb craftsmanship that still is theirs. One film about the village, the other about a family. We are staying in Oaxaca and every morning we are going to the village. In the beginning we met a lot of difficulties. The villagers are very suspicious towards strangers - and rightly so. Three years ago a tourist visited Teotitlan and when he left one of the sains in the church vanished too. The president of the church is supposed to have sold it to him. The president was jailed and obliged to replace the saint. The new San Pedro is of simple stone only - the old one was of ivory. Now all strangers, who are not coming for sarapes only, are looked upon with great suspiciousness. If they are not out procuring saints they might be looking for the treasures that the villagers dug down on the hill - sloaps during the revolution and still not have been able to recover.... Slowly we have succeeded in overcoming most of the distrust and now I am rather optimistic about the work."

Sloaps (?)  
sic in letter

Of course I immediately wrote to Lennart and told him he might be able to find your beautiful book in Oaxaca. If you have anything message he should have in connection with his work, he is staying at the Hotel

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Monte Alban in Oaxaca during May. He hopes to be in New York between the 7th and the 10th of June, and Mr. Steichen has asked to see him, as he feels that his photomurals are glorious. Maybe you would like to meet him, too? I know that you and he would get along magnificently. He has "one wife and three children" (a son is coming to the US next year to go to college here) and his associate has "one wife and one cat." The films are being made for the Swedish Government, but Lennart is anxious for sponsorship here, too.

Did you by any chance see my beloved Roman Vishniac's TV program today - his scientific work, and also the photographs of the Polish Jews? And "Death of a Salesman" not long ago? Maybe the medium is growing up.... Incidentally, the telecast "This is Edward Steichen" is winning all the prizes.

My best love to you and to Chris, always -

Grace

Neenah Bond  
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