**Opening words by Sergio Zapata Lozano, Director of Instituto Cultural de México,**

**San Antonio, Texas, November 22, 2019**

Thank you very much. It is an honor for me and my staff to host you here at the Mexican Cultural Institute. I feel very proud that the Institute is hosting this workshop that focuses on the Mexican American culture.

I’ll be very brief, but I do want to address the fact that the Mexican Cultural Institute is the first that Mexico opened abroad fifty-one years ago; the fifty years anniversary was celebrated last year. It aims at providing our Mexican American community with the means to relate with the country of origin through culture. It is our purpose to bring them closer to the values, artistic impressions, flavors and colors that constitute a shared heritage with people of Mexico.

In this, our space, we bring not only wonderful artists, as is the case with the current status of the exhibit, but also incorporate the cultural expression of the Mexican American community.  It is a space to get in touch and get to know the people on the other side of the border.

We are certain that through this exposure, the community will own that side of their own nature that they are not daily exposed to, that is, their roots.  And we hope that through it, we will strengthen the sense of identity, belonging and affections, and construct a social and cultural network that is borderless and it is our belief that will make us stronger. United we are more.

I want to address the fact that I want to congratulate you all and encourage you all for your work and effort at this point of our history between Mexico and the United States. There is an urgent need for a new narrative that can address all areas of our binational identity, and the work that you do in cultural affairs is very significant.

Thank you very much to Maria, your daughter, Binisa, and all of you that are going to work these two days. This is your house, and I wish you success in your work.