

Espejo" (p. 224 and p. 403), and somehow he translates "Conejo" as "Rabbit Wire" and "El Nido" as "The Hen's Nest" (p. 336). But such errors are trivial. Read as a report and not as an analysis, this book is fascinating and extremely useful.

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*A History of Mexican Mural Painting.* By ANTONIO RODRÍGUEZ. Translated by MARINA CORBY. New York, 1969. G. P. Putnam's Sons. Illustrations. Notes. Glossary. Index. Pp. 518. \$30.00.

This expensive and luxurious volume has the finest collection of photographed Mexican mural paintings yet published. It is worth buying just for the illustrations.

The text cannot be given such unqualified praise, although in some respects it is excellent. Rodríguez overreached himself by including all Mexican wall painting from the earliest rock shelter art, to which he does less than justice. The section on pre-Columbian painting depends mainly on Villagra, Garibay and León-Portilla and is valuable as a brief summary of some of their ideas in English, but Rodríguez is clearly not at home with the subject. The same may be said of the fifty pages on Colonial and nineteenth-century painting. The virtues of these earlier sections are those of popular journalism.

The reader would be best advised to begin the text on p. 149 with the section "Since the Revolution," for the more recent art is the author's principal interest. In contrast to his generalized treatment of earlier ages, he has first-hand knowledge to impart on the art of the twentieth century. The chapters on the Revolutionary period, Rivera and Orozco—all subjects on which much has been written—provide little that is new except the viewpoint. The most valuable sections deal with the most recent work, beginning with Siqueiros and Tamayo and ending with González Camarena, Chávez Morado, Juan O'Gorman, Manuel Felguérez, and others. The style is informal, and the author does not avoid judgments of quality. His tone is more that of the critic than of the historian.

Rodríguez does not miss the great importance of Siqueiros, who is generally underestimated. The pertinent chapter is the most valuable single part of the book and one of the best essays I know of on Siqueiros. Rodríguez brings out his technical innovations in plastic paints and industrial techniques, his compositional originality, and

his ability to "enter into the spirit of suffering," which gives his art such profound social meaning.

This book is just one of several which have recently appeared in English on the Mexican Renaissance, but it is by far the most complete, ambitious and up-to-date. Bernard Myers' *Mexican Painting in Our Time* (1956) is still helpful on the major figures. Jean Charlot's *Mexican Mural Renaissance, 1920-1925* (1963) is definitive on the period it covers but is short of illustrations. Emily Edwards' *Painted Walls of Mexico* (1966) surveys all periods but is very brief. It is clear that the Rodríguez book fulfills a need, for its text is ample and the illustrations abundant.

The brief concluding chapter, "Image of Mexico," does not bring out the importance of Mexican art on a world scale. Charlot's (1963) final chapter is more successful, if too defensive. With the passing of time it becomes ever more clear that the twentieth century has so far produced only two schools of painting which will retain their importance into future centuries: the School of Paris, 1903-1940; and the Mexican Renaissance, 1921 to the death of Siqueiros, who continues to advance the style with great power.

It is strange that Mexican art should require an *apologia*, especially in the United States, which has been a major beneficiary of the movement. But the seriousness and precocity of the Mexican paintings made them hard to take as art. The painters of the School of Paris were mainly devoted to formal essays, and they accepted the idea that art was for the delectation of the private collector, as Matisse confessed. At the opposite extreme were the Mexican muralists. Rodríguez quotes Orozco: "Mural painting is the highest, most logical, purest and most powerful form of painting. It is also the least selfish, for it cannot be turned into an object of personal gain or be hidden for the enjoyment of a privileged few. It is for the people, it is for everyone" (p. 492). This aim of public service produced an Expressionist style. Mexican painting remains the only serious expression in art of twentieth-century social ideals. If one understands that, the Rodríguez book takes on its proper scale and meaning, and the weaknesses of the earlier chapters become insignificant.

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*Black Man in Red Cuba.* By JOHN CLYTUS. With JANE RIEKER.  
Coral Gables, 1970. University of Miami Press. Pp. 158. \$4.95.