

**CONTEMPORARY
MEXICAN
PRINTS**

INTRODUCTION

CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN PRINTS

PERMANENT COLLECTION
FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES CORPORATION

1946

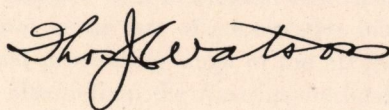
INTRODUCTION

IT is with the fullest appreciation of the great contributions made to world art by our neighbor republics that this exhibition of Contemporary Mexican Prints is presented. Since art is one of the truest means for revealing the heart and mind of a people, it logically should play an increasingly important part in the development of a more thorough understanding between our countries.

We in the United States feel a very strong sense of hemisphere pride when we contemplate the ancient arts of our southern neighbors. And we see evidence every day of the influence of the contemporary art of Latin America on our own commercial and fashion designers, on our sculptors, painters and printmakers.

In presenting our collections of contemporary printmaking, we once more affirm our faith that through the language of the artist, people will be better able to recognize those traits common to all men which bind humanity together in universal kinship.

We wish to express our profound gratitude to Sra. Inez Amor de Pérez Espinosa, Director of the Galería de Arte Mexicano of Mexico City, to Sr. Justino Fernandez, and to Lic. Francisco Fuentes Berain who assisted in selecting the prints.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Thor J. Watson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final "n".

PRINTMAKING IN MEXICO

By LEOPOLDO MÉNDEZ

WHAT does the art of Mexican lithography and engraving produced during the last century reflect: has it a social-political function; does it reflect in general the social understanding of man; and is it this which gives them their outstanding plastic quality?

This question, which for me has a profound significance, can, I believe, be answered with a certain degree of clarity by observing a few examples produced in the course of a century in this field of the arts, erroneously called black-and-white.

At the time that our nationality was beginning to take form, about the middle of the 19th century, the engravers Villasana, Escalante and Hernandez, among others, gave a new life to lithographic art through the newspaper they edited and illustrated, a periodical dedicated to political criticism, called *La Orquesta* (The Orchestra). On going through some volumes of this publication which appeared twice a week, I renewed my own idea of how important the work of these three artists was in the development of Mexican lithography, in spite of the obvious influence exercised upon them by Daumier, the Parisian comrade, or rather perhaps because of this influence. It is equally apparent that in order to carry on their political ideals they had to struggle within themselves in order to discard stereotyped forms and acquire a plastic expression suitable to these ends. It must be understood that, with rare exceptions, the lithographic art of those days was confined to the field of genre representations or iconographical imagery.

The most complex political themes were treated by these three artists in the lithographed page of *La Orquesta* with grace and force unequaled in those days in Mexico, a grace and force which no doubt proved useful in the struggle against the enemies of *The Reform* which this paper waged; and which was led by Don Benito Juarez, the contemporary and friend, ideologically speaking, of Abraham Lincoln. This lithographed page, executed at times with great simplicity and very direct effect, at others charged with ideological motivation, must have produced the effect of acid thrown in the face of conservative interventionists. It was, so to speak, the loud and penetrating laugh of the Mexican people in front of the perfumed beard of Maximilian, the Austrian Archduke.

It is a living proof, fortunately, of the vitality of the active artistic qualities of the lithograph, and significant for Mexican culture, that even in spite of the thirty years of darkness under the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz, it did not perish. The people had accepted this proof, and again those same people, through Manilla and Posada, and principally through the latter, created new

forms and media of plastic expression with engraving and lithography. Stereotyped plastic forms continued to function toward the same ends as in the epoch of *The Reform* and in the same manner in which they are today produced by way of the press, superindustrialized or primitive.

José Guadalupe Posada, an awakened spirit, made use of lithography, wood or metal engraving, or even of zincography, which it is said was a new element created by his inventiveness. With these media he built his work, and whenever opportunity presented itself imbued it with his convictions and his sympathies for the popular democratic movement opposed to the feudal dictatorship of the Diaz government. This great artist even edited with his meager resources a small newspaper whose subtitle read: "A newspaper dedicated to the working class." Thus, through those media which after all were primitive, for undoubtedly photoengraving was not in his reach, he produced his abundant work, now in the workshops of the publisher of *corridos* and recipe books for workers and housewives, Vanegas Arroyo; already used for that famous opposition paper *El Hijo del Ahuizote* (The Son of the Ahuizote). José Guadalupe Posada died in the second decade of our century. He never enjoyed honors, and no one knew of his existence or passing except the one who had benefited by his artistic creations—the man in the street.

During the last years, Posada has been partly restored by artists and Government alike to his proper place, but in my opinion, his work and his personality have still not been allotted their true status.

Contemporary engraving and lithography have continued the same course, continued the tradition, however not in a conservative attitude, but as a product of new realities, both social and cultural. The forms of plastic expression in this field have developed enormously but unfortunately the mechanical methods of our grandfather's time still are in use.

The art of lithography and engraving in the immediate future of Mexico must develop notwithstanding our conditions as a semi-colonial country, and it is evident that in spite of this disadvantageous situation our artists will not be held back. This is already being demonstrated by the existence of the *Taller de Grafica Popular* (Workshop of Popular Engraving) and the vivid example of José Clemente Orozco, of David Alfaro Siqueiros and many others.

As example and proof of what I have said, I would like to refer briefly to the individual case of Orozco, inasmuch as the character of his work answers clearly the sense of our initial question. The lithographs of this artist are among those that best reveal the particular reaction of their creator, confronted with the reality of the human drama; thus the artist wants to express social truths. Are not the plastic results of these lithographs perhaps the richest in value, and, in the message which they bring us, the most direct?

These brief considerations will give, I hope, the affirmative answer to the questions stated at the beginning.

CATALOGUE

IGNACIO AGUIRRE

- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| 1. <i>Girl</i> | Lithograph |
| 2. <i>Lament</i> | Lithograph |

CARLOS ALVARADO LANG

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| 3. <i>Composition</i> | Woodcut |
|-----------------------|---------|

EMILIO AMERO

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| 4. <i>Girl's Head</i> | Lithograph |
|-----------------------|------------|

RAÚL ANGUIANO

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| 5. <i>Rich and Poor</i> | Lithograph |
|-------------------------|------------|

LUIS ARENAL

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| 6. <i>Woman with Load</i> | Lithograph |
|---------------------------|------------|

ABELARDO AVILA

- | | |
|-----------------|---------|
| 7. <i>Trees</i> | Woodcut |
|-----------------|---------|

ALBERTO BELTRÁN

- | | |
|------------------------|---------|
| 8. <i>Pancho Villa</i> | Woodcut |
|------------------------|---------|

ANGEL BRACHO

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| 9. <i>Heating the Drum</i> | Lithograph |
|----------------------------|------------|

BAEZ CASTELAR

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| 10. <i>The Topper</i> | Aquatint |
|-----------------------|----------|

JEAN CHARLOT
11. *Tortillas* Color Print

JOSÉ CHÁVEZ MORADO
12. *Dance of Death* Lithograph

MIGUEL COVARRUBIAS
13. *The Lindy Hop* Lithograph

LOLA CUETO
14. *Masquerade* Mezzotint

FRANCISCO DÍAZ DE LEÓN
15. *Group of Four Figures* Aquatint

FRANCISCO DOSAMANTES
16. *Mayan Women* Lithograph

JESÚS ESCOBEDO
17. *Two Women* Lithograph

JESÚS GUERRERO GALVÁN
18. *The Angel of Death* Lithograph

FRANCISCO GUTIÉRREZ
19. *Mountain and Horses* Lithograph

JOSÉ GUTIÉRREZ
20. *The Little Bull* Lithograph

AMADOR LUGO
21. *Houses* Woodcut

LEOPOLDO MÉNDEZ
22. *Deportation to Death* Woodcut
23. *Liberation* Woodcut
24. *Smokers* Color Woodcut

CARLOS MÉRIDA
25. *The Divorce* Lithograph

ROBERTO MONTENEGRO
26. *Fisherman* Silver Point
27. *Mother and Child* Lithograph
28. *Red Mill* Lithograph
29. *Seated Woman* Silver Point

FRANCISCO MORA
30. *Carrier* Color Lithograph
31. *Theatre* Lithograph

ISIDORO OCAMPO
32. *Chinese Bombardier* Lithograph
33. *Cutting Sugar Cane* Woodcut

JOSÉ CLEMENTE OROZCO
34. *Clown* Etching
35. *Masked Dancers* Lithograph
36. *Scavengers* Lithograph

MARIANO PAREDES
37. *The Antiquarian* Aquatint

GONZALO DE LA PAZ PÉREZ

38. *Indians Walking* Woodcut

HECTOR POLEO

39. *Farewell* Lithograph

JOSÉ GUADALUPE POSADA

40. *Calavera of Huerta* Relief Etching
41. *Calavera of the Zapatistas* Relief Etching
42. *The Female Dandy* Relief Etching on Zinc

DIEGO RIVERA

43. *Self-portrait* Lithograph
44. *Zapata* Lithograph

DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS

45. *Pegasus of the Conquest* Lithograph

FRANCISCO VASQUEZ ("Panchor")

46. *The Diviner, Uxmal, Yucatan* Aquatint

ALFREDO ZALCE

47. *Garden of Yucatan* Lithograph
48. *Parade of the Shoeshine Boys* Color Lithograph
49. *Visit to the Museum* Lithograph
50. *Woman with Children* Lithograph

Information on the company's art collections
may be obtained by communicating with
Fine Arts Department, IBM Corp., 590 Madison Avenue
New York 22, N. Y.