

LEONARD'S PRICE INDEX OF LATIN AMERICAN ART AT AUCTION / Susan Theran.--Newton, MA: Auction, Index Inc., August 1999.--556p.:ill.--ISBN 0-918819-98-9: \$149.95.

"Twenty-one years ago the Latin American art market didn't exist," begins one of the essays in this reference work, whose size and weight are ample proof that the statement above is no longer valid. Leonard's Price Index of Latin American Art is an exhaustive guide to over 25,000 items of art by Latin American or Caribbean-born artists, as well as works by artists on Latin American subjects, auctioned between 1969 and 1999. The sales that are meticulously recorded range from seventeenth-century landscapes by Dutch artists to photorealist images by contemporary Mexican photographers. By way of example, entries read as follows:

LAM, Wifredo, Cuban, 1902-1982, \$1,267,500*, La Manana Verde, p.1943, prov., exhib., lit., catalogue cover lot, (05-27-98, Sotheby-NY, #12, illus.), 73 1/2 in x 48 1/2 in., oil on paper mounted on canvas.

Decoded the entry tells one that the painting, La Manana Verde has a proper provenance, has been exhibited, has been cited in monographs and exhibition catalogues, and was auctioned at Sotheby's (New York) for \$1,267,500 dollars (with the buyer's premium included in the sale price) on May 27, 1998.

Bu apart from being a guidebook for an auction house or a junk-bond salesman looking for a sound investment, is the Index of more immediate and practical use to the art librarian or researcher? As a matter of fact, it is, for in addition to listing the works auctioned in the last twenty years, ranging from from Eduardo Abela to Francisco Zuñiga,, the Index contains a great deal of valuable information on Latin American art. The information is tucked away in mini-essays scattered among the sales data, and present in the multiple forwards and appendices with which the book is amply endowed.

Mary-Anne Martin, who founded Sotheby's Latin American Paintings Department, opens her essay "The Latin American Market Comes of Age" with the sentence quoted at the beginning of this review. She recounts that first auction (at which a Frida Kahlo picture was bought for a mere \$19,000!), and the minimal interest it stired among non-Latin buyers. After a series of prominent shows in the late 1980s, the public began to turn its attention to Latin American art. To illustrate this, Martin traces the development of the market for works by Frida Kahlo, Wifredo Lam, and Rufino Tamayo, showing how renewed attention to Latin American artists among both Latins and non-Latins has pushed the demand for paintings and sketches by these three seminal artists through the one million dollar barrier. A new generation of collectors, Martin asserts, abetted by a new generation of scholarship on Latin American art, has placed a high premium on art, which was unremarked upon and unsold outside of Latin America itself a generation ago. Today, there is a high level of interest in contemporary Latin American artists and their work.

Alejandro Anreus, who has worked in the Visual Arts Section of the Organization of

American States (OAS) in Washington, contributes an overview of "Art: The Twentieth Century," tracing the evolution of artistic trends among Latin American artists. Not surprisingly, these mirror the influences and styles which characterized European and North American art of the period. Post-Impressionism, Spanish Realism, and Symbolism dominated the work of turn of the century artists. Later, Cubism and Futurism, although finding few actual exponents, exerted powerful influence as various avant-garde movements emerged, some as adjuncts to literary movements of the same period. In Mexico, indigenismo and post-revolutionary progressivism were merged in the Muralist Movement; in countries like Peru and Argentina, influential journals were the focus of social, artistic, and literary movements. Social Realism, Constructionism, Surrealism, and Abstraction were popular between the world wars; afterwards, Informalism, Neofiguration, and Geometry replaced socially-oriented ideas with individualistic and abstract tendencies. Anreus helpfully names many of the artists associated with these eras, as well as influential critics of Latin American art who have examined artistic developments in the Americas.

August O. Uribe, a senior vice-president at Sotheby's, describes the evolution of "Latin American Art at Auction," by noting the growing value of work by and on Latins, and by asking and trying to answer the question, "What is Latin American art?" Are both the landscapes of Dutch artists who traveled to Brazil in the 1630s and the Paris-based Cubist paintings of Diego Rivera considered to be Latin American art? In answering the question, Uribe also examines some aspects of Latin America's colonial era art.

Sections on "How to Use this Book," auction house terminology, abbreviations, and "How to Read an Entry" precede a really valuable part of the Index, Artists' Biographies. The 974 entries are primarily Latin American artists, but many European and North American artists who worked in Central and South America, as well as a few geographic terms and names of schools or movements are also included. Many are brief, no more than a sentence, but as the majority of the names are surely excluded from the Groves Dictionary of Art, this part of the work will be invaluable.

Scattered at random among the pages of fine print, detailing the auction of tens of thousands of works, are little gems of essays on everything from the Baroque carvings of mulatto Antonio Francisco Lisboa (declared part of the national heritage of Brazil), to the "flipping" (quick purchase and profitable sale) of art, to Hudson River School painters working in the tropics, to mini-essays on individual artists, works, schools, and movements. There are discourses on auction houses, on getting names and other details right before a sale, on the concept of monetary value in art. An index of nationalities and list of auction house addresses closes the volume. This reference volume documents growing vitality of the market for Latin American art in a world that is no longer Eurocentric. Its many excellent supplemental sources of information make it an important work for any library committed to representing multiculturalism in art.

Peter Stern
University of Massachusetts, Amherst